



# WESLEY'S STANDARD SERMONS



# WESLEY'S STANDARD SERMONS

CONSISTING OF FORTY-FOUR DISCOURSES, PUBLISHED IN  
FOUR VOLUMES, IN 1746, 1748, 1750, AND 1760 (Fourth Edition, 1787)

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

## NINE ADDITIONAL SERMONS

PUBLISHED IN VOLS. I to IV OF WESLEY'S COLLECTED  
WORKS, 1771

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VOLUME II

LAMAR & BARTON, AGENTS  
PUBLISHING HOUSE M.E. CHURCH, SOUTH  
NASHVILLE DALLAS RICHMOND  
SAN FRANCISCO

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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## SERMON XXVII

### UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

#### DISCOURSE XII

ON Sunday, January 30, 1743, Wesley walked over from Windsor to Egham, a town on the Thames, opposite to Staines, some four or five miles from Windsor, 'where Mr. ——— preached one of the most miserable sermons I ever heard; stuffed so full of dull, senseless, improbable lies of those he complimented with the title of "false prophets." I preached at one, and endeavoured to rescue the poor text (Matt. vii. 15) out of so bad hands.' I suppose Mr. ——— had been abusing the Methodist preachers. On March 13, 1757, Wesley preached from verse 16 at Snowsfields, but was feeling unwell; and to his great joy, John Fletcher, who had that day been ordained at Whitehall, came to his help, and took the Communion service along with him at West Street. He preached from verse 20 at the Chapel (i.e. West Street) on August 23, 1761.

It is clear from the passage in the great eschatological discourse (Matt. xxiv. 24) that our Lord had definite prevision of the 'false Christs and false prophets' who would trouble the Church after His ascension; but it seems strange that He should refer to them so early as this. Probably these verses are an editorial insertion taken from a later discourse; but appropriate here because these false prophets would dissuade men from entering in at the 'narrow gate,' and lead them along 'the broad road.'

The main object of Wesley's sermon is to give his people directions as to their hearing and receiving the Communion from ministers of the Church of England who were manifestly ungodly men, or who taught doctrines opposed to those advocated by Wesley. It is of course well known that Wesley never meant his people to separate from the Church of England. In the *Minutes* of 1766 he denies that the Methodists are Dissenters; the Methodist services, he says, were in a sense public worship, but not such as supersedes the Church service. If they were they would be essentially defective. For they seldom had the four grand parts of public prayer: deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Neither were they, even on

the Lord's Day, concluded with the Lord's Supper. He concludes, 'I advise, therefore, all the Methodists in England and Ireland, who have been brought up in the Church, constantly to attend the service of the Church, at least, every Lord's day.' In *Minutes*, 1769, he says, 'Let us keep to the Church. They that leave the Church leave the Methodists. Let every preacher go [to church] always on Sunday morning, and, when he can, in the afternoon.' But in 1784 he ordained Coke and Asbury as Superintendents and Whatcoat and Vasey as Elders for America, with power to administer the Sacraments and hold full services, for which he prepared a 'liturgy little differing from that of the Church of England'; soon after, he did the same thing for Scotland. The question could not but be raised, whether the same power ought not to be given to the Methodist preachers in England; and in 1786 he yielded so far as to allow his preachers to hold service in church hours (1) when the minister is a notoriously wicked man; (2) when he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious, doctrine; (3) when there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people; (4) when there is no church at all within two or three miles (*Minutes*, 1786). In *Minutes*, 1788, the assistants have discretion given them to read the Prayer-Book in the preaching-houses on Sunday mornings, where the Society acquiesce in it, but not on the Sundays when the sacrament is administered in the parish church; and the people are to be 'strenuously exhorted to attend the sacrament in the parish church on those Sundays.' In a letter dated January 9, 1782, in answer to an appeal from five Methodists at Baildon, near Bradford, he allows that 'if the minister began either to preach the absolute decrees, or to rail at and ridicule Christian perfection, they should quietly and silently go out of the church; yet attend it again the next opportunity.' The Conference of 1793 was beyond question right when it affirmed: 'Our venerable father, who is gone to his great reward, lived and died a member and friend of the Church of England. His attachment to it was so strong and so unshaken, that nothing but irresistible necessity induced him to deviate from it in any degree.' The Conference felt that a similar irresistible necessity now faced it; and it decided that the Lord's Supper might be administered by the preachers where the whole Society was unanimous for it, 'and will not be contented without it.'

This sermon was separately published in 1758 as *A Caution against False Prophets, particularly Recommended to the People called Methodists*.

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*Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.*

*Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ?*

*Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit : but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.*

*A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit : neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.*

*Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.*

*Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

—MATT. vii. 15-20.

1. IT is scarce possible to express or conceive what multitudes of souls run on to destruction, because they would not be persuaded to walk in a *narrow* way, even though it were the way to everlasting salvation. And the same thing we may still observe daily. Such is the folly and madness of mankind, that thousands of men still rush on in the way to hell, only because it is a *broad* way. They walk in it themselves, because others do because so many perish, they will add to the number. Such is the amazing influence of example over the weak, miserable children of men ! It continually peoples the regions of death, and drowns numberless souls in everlasting perdition.

2. To warn mankind of this, to guard as many as possible against this spreading contagion, God has commanded His watchmen to cry aloud, and show the people the danger they are in. For this end He has sent His servants, the prophets, in their succeeding generations, to point out the narrow path, and exhort all men not to be conformed to this world. But what, if the watchmen themselves fall into the snare against which they should warn others ? What, if 'the prophets prophesy deceit' ? if they cause the 'people to err from the way' ? What shall be done, if they point out, as the way to eternal life, what is in truth the way to eternal death, and exhort others to walk, as they do themselves, in the broad, not the narrow way ?

3. Is this an unheard-of, is it an uncommon thing ? Nay, God knoweth it is not. The instances of it are almost in-

numerable. We may find them in every age and nation. But how terrible is this—when the ambassadors of God turn agents for the devil!—when they who are commissioned to teach men the way to heaven do in fact teach them the way to hell! These are like the locusts of Egypt, ‘which eat up the residue that had escaped, that had remained after the hail.’ They devour even the residue of men that had escaped, that were not destroyed by ill example. It is not, therefore, without cause, that our wise and gracious Master so solemnly cautions us against them: ‘Beware,’ saith He, ‘of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.’

4. A caution this of the utmost importance. That it may the more effectually sink into our hearts, let us inquire, first, who these false prophets are: secondly, what appearance they put on: and, thirdly, how we may know what they really are, notwithstanding their fair appearance.

I. 1. We are, first, to inquire who these false prophets are. And this it is needful to do the more diligently, because these very men have so laboured to ‘wrest this scripture to their own,’ though not only their own, ‘destruction.’ In order, therefore, to cut off all dispute, I shall raise no dust (as the manner of some is), neither use any loose, rhetorical exclamations, to deceive the hearts of the simple, but speak rough, plain truths, such as none can deny who has either understanding or modesty left, and such truths as have the closest connexion with the whole tenor of the preceding discourse: whereas too many have interpreted these words without any regard to all that went before; as if they bore no manner of relation to the sermon in the close of which they stand.

2. By *prophets* here (as in many other passages of Scripture, particularly in the New Testament) are meant, not those

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I. par. 2. This is undoubtedly right. The prophet is not the fore-teller; but the man who speaks for, on behalf of, God. His message may include as a credential the fore-telling

of the future; but even in the Old Testament that is a subordinate function, and in the New it almost disappears. The worst error of the mediæval and Roman and High

who foretell things to come, but those who speak in the name of God, those men who profess to be sent of God, to teach others the way to heaven.

Those are *false* prophets, who teach a false way to heaven, a way which does not lead thither, or (which comes in the end to the same point), who do not teach the true.

3. Every broad way is infallibly a false one. Therefore this is one plain, sure rule 'They who teach men to walk in a broad way, a way that many walk in, are false prophets.'

Again: the true way to heaven is a narrow way. Therefore this is another plain, sure rule: 'They who do not teach men to walk in a narrow way, to be singular, are false prophets.'

4. To be more particular: the only true way to heaven is that pointed out in the preceding sermon. Therefore they are false prophets who do not teach men to walk in this way.

Now the way to heaven pointed out in the preceding sermon is the way of lowliness, mourning, meekness, and holy desire, love of God and of our neighbour, doing good, and suffering evil for Christ's sake. They are, therefore, false prophets, who teach, as the way to heaven, any other way than this.

5. It matters not what they call that other way. They may call it faith, or good works; or faith and works; or repentance, or repentance, faith, and new obedience. All these are good words but if, under these, or any other terms whatever, they teach men any way distinct from this, they are properly false prophets.

6. How much more do they fall under that condemnation, who speak evil of this good way; but above all, they who

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Anglican conception of the ministerial office is that it represents the *priesthood* of the Old Testament. The Christian minister is essentially a *prophet*, with the right to expect the inspiration of the Spirit in all his public utterances. The pulpit fails only when its occupant fails to claim and realize his calling to speak in the name and under the direct inspiration of the Lord. Of Wesley Dr. Clifford says (*Centenary Address*,

p. 112), 'John Wesley holds a place as primary as it is arresting, and as unchallenged as it is immeasurably and prophetically fruitful. He is the chief prophet of the eighteenth century. The prophetism of the New Testament in all its sublime qualities and successes reaches its maximum in him, and places him at the spring-head of the spiritual life of our modern England.' See Horton's *Verbum Dei*, passim.

teach the directly opposite way, the way of pride, of levity, of passion, of worldly desires, of loving pleasure more than God, of unkindness to our neighbour, of unconcern for good works, and suffering no evil, no persecution, for righteousness' sake !

7. If it be asked, 'Why, who ever did teach this, or who does teach it, as the way to heaven?' I answer, Ten thousand wise and honourable men, even all those, of whatever denomination, who encourage the proud, the trifler, the passionate, the lover of the world, the man of pleasure, the unjust or unkind, the easy, careless, harmless, useless creature, the man who suffers no reproach for righteousness' sake, to imagine he is in the way to heaven. These are false prophets in the highest sense of the word. These are traitors both to God and man. These are no other than the first-born of Satan; the eldest sons of Apollyon, the destroyer. These are far above the rank of ordinary cut-throats, for they murder the souls of men. They are continually peopling the realms of night; and whenever they follow the poor souls whom they have destroyed, 'hell shall be moved from beneath to meet them at their coming.'

II. 1. But do they come now in their own shape? By no means. If it were so, they could not destroy. You would take the alarm, and flee for your life. Therefore they put on a quite contrary appearance (which was the second thing to be considered): 'they come to you in sheep's clothing, although inwardly they are ravening wolves.'

2. 'They come to you in sheep's clothing', that is, with an appearance of harmlessness. They come in the most mild, inoffensive manner, without any mark or token of enmity. Who can imagine that these quiet creatures would do any hurt to any one? Perhaps they may not be so zealous and active in doing good as one would wish they were. However, you see no reason to suspect that they have even the desire to do any harm. But this is not all.

3. They come, secondly, with an appearance of usefulness.

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II. 1. 'In sheep's clothing'; i.e. in the guise of Christians. See John x.

Indeed to this, to do good, they are particularly called. They are set apart for this very thing. They are particularly commissioned to watch over your soul, and to train you up to eternal life. It is their whole business, to 'go about doing good, and healing those that are oppressed of the devil.' And you have always been accustomed to look upon them in this light, as messengers of God, sent to bring you a blessing.

4. They come, thirdly, with an appearance of religion. All they do is for conscience' sake! They assure you, it is out of mere zeal for God, that they are making God a liar. It is out of pure concern for religion, that they would destroy it, root and branch. All they speak is only from a love of truth, and a fear lest it should suffer, and, it may be, from a regard for the Church, and a desire to defend her from all her enemies.

5. Above all, they come with an appearance of love. They take all these pains only for *your* good. They should not trouble themselves about you, but that they have a kindness for you. They will make large professions of their goodwill, of their concern for the danger you are in, and of their earnest desire to preserve you from error, from being entangled in new and mischievous doctrines. They should be very sorry to see one who *means* so well, hurried into any extreme, perplexed with strange and unintelligible notions, or deluded into enthusiasm. Therefore it is that they advise you to keep still in the plain middle way; and to beware of 'being righteous over-much,' lest you should 'destroy yourself.'

III. 1. But how may we know what they really are, notwithstanding their fair appearance? This was the third thing into which it was proposed to inquire. Our blessed Lord saw how needful it was for all men to know false prophets, however disguised. He saw, likewise, how unable most men were to deduce a truth through a long train of consequences. He therefore gives us a short and plain rule, easy to be understood by men of the meanest capacities, and easy to be applied upon all occasions: 'Ye shall know them by their fruits.'

2. Upon all occasions you may easily apply this rule. In order to know whether any who speak in the name of God

are false or true prophets, it is easy to observe, first, What are the fruits of their doctrine as to themselves? What effect has it had upon their lives? Are they holy and unblamable in all things? What effect has it had upon their hearts? Does it appear by the general tenor of their conversation, that their tempers are holy, heavenly, divine? that the mind is in them which was in Christ Jesus? that they are meek, lowly, patient, lovers of God and man, and zealous of good works?

3. You may easily observe, secondly, what are the fruits of their doctrine as to those that hear them—in many, at least, though not in all; for the Apostles themselves did not convert all that heard them. Have these the mind that was in Christ? And do they walk as He also walked? And was it by hearing these men that they began so to do? Were they inwardly and outwardly wicked till they heard them? If so, it is a manifest proof that those are true prophets, teachers sent of God. But if it is not so, if they do not effectually teach either themselves or others to love and serve God, it is a manifest proof that they are false prophets: that God hath not sent them.

4. An hard saying this! How few can bear it? This our Lord was sensible of, and therefore condescends to prove it at large, by several clear and convincing arguments. 'Do men,' says He, 'gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' (verse 16). Do you expect that these evil men should bring forth good fruit? As well might you expect that thorns should bring forth grapes, or that figs should grow upon thistles! 'Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit' (verse 17). Every true prophet, every teacher whom I have sent, bringeth forth the good fruit of holiness. But a false prophet, a teacher whom I have not sent, brings forth only sin and wickedness. 'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.' A true prophet, a teacher sent from God, does not bring forth good fruit sometimes only, but always, not accidentally, but by a kind of necessity. In like manner, a false prophet, one whom God hath not sent,

does not bring forth evil fruit accidentally, or sometimes only, but always, and of necessity. 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire' (verse 19). Such infallibly will be the lot of those prophets who bring not forth good fruit, who do not save souls from sin, who do not bring sinners to repentance. 'Wherefore,' let this stand as an eternal rule, 'By their fruits ye shall know them' (verse 20). They who, in fact, bring the proud, passionate, unmerciful, lovers of the world, to be lowly, gentle, lovers of God and man,—they are true prophets; they are sent from God, who therefore confirms their word. On the other hand, they whose hearers, if unrighteous before, remain unrighteous still, or, at least, void of any righteousness which 'exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,'—they are false prophets; they are not sent of God; therefore their word falls to the ground and, without a miracle of grace, they and their hearers together will fall into the bottomless pit!

5. O 'beware of these false prophets'! For though they 'come in sheep's clothing, yet inwardly they are ravening wolves.' They only destroy and devour the flock they tear them in pieces, if there is none to help them. They will not, cannot, lead you in the way to heaven. How should they, when they know it not themselves? O beware they do not turn you out of the way, and cause you to 'lose what you have wrought'!

6. But perhaps you will ask, 'If there is such danger in hearing them, ought I to hear them at all?' It is a weighty question, such as deserves the deepest consideration, and ought not to be answered but upon the calmest thought, the most deliberate reflection. For many years I have been almost afraid to speak at all concerning it; being unable to determine one way or the other, or to give any judgement upon it. Many reasons there are which readily occur, and incline

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III. 6. See Introduction above. The two main difficulties about the preachers in the Church of England were the openly godless lives of many

of the fox-hunting, hard-drinking clergy; and their constant attacks on the Methodist doctrines, particularly justification by faith, the

me to say, 'Hear them not.' And yet what our Lord speaks concerning the false prophets of His own times seems to imply the contrary: 'Then spake Jesus unto the multitude, and to His disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat'—are the ordinary, stated teachers in your Church: 'all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not.' Now, that these were false prophets in the highest sense, our Lord hath shown during the whole course of His ministry, as indeed He does in those very words, 'They say, and do not.' Therefore, by their fruits His disciples could not but know them, seeing they were open to the view of all men. Accordingly, He warns them again and again, to beware of these false prophets. And yet He does not forbid them to hear even these: nay, He, in effect, commands them so to do, in those words, 'All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do': for unless they heard them, they could not know, much less observe, whatsoever they bade them do. Here, then, our Lord Himself gives a plain direction, both to His Apostles and the whole multitude, in some circumstances, to hear even false prophets, known and acknowledged so to be.

7. But perhaps it will be said, 'He only directed to hear them when they read the Scripture to the congregation.' I answer, At the same time that they thus read the Scripture, they generally expounded it too. And here is no kind of intimation that they were to hear the one, and not the other

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witness of the Spirit, and Christian perfection. But apart from these things, the beginning of the eighteenth century marked the nadir of preaching. As Dr. Stalker says (article on 'Preaching' in *Encyc. of Religion*), 'Anything like enthusiasm in the pulpit was looked upon as vulgar, and the quenching of the fire soon proceeded from form to substance, the tone of belief becoming lukewarm and the distinctive message of the gospel being forgotten.

Preachers formed their style on that of Addison, and many a sermon hardly attained to the warmth of an article in the *Spectator*. The model preacher of the time was Archbishop Tillotson, and even in the chapels of the Dissenters cold respectability held sway.'

The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.

7. After the return from the Captivity, preaching formed a regular part of the Jewish synagogue service.

also. Nay, the very terms, ' All things whatsoever they bid you observe,' exclude any such limitation.

8. Again : unto them, unto false prophets, undeniably such, is frequently committed (O grief to speak ! for surely these things ought not so to be) the administration of the sacrament also. To direct men, therefore, not to hear them, would be, in effect, to cut them off from the ordinances of God. But this we dare not do ; considering the validity of the ordinance doth not depend on the goodness of him that administers, but on the faithfulness of Him that ordained it, who will and doth meet us in His appointed ways. Therefore, on this account, likewise, I scruple to say, ' Hear not even the false prophets.' Even by these who are under a curse themselves, God can and doth give us His blessing. For the bread which they break, we have experimentally known to be ' the communion of the body of Christ ', and the cup which God blessed, even by their unhallowed lips, was to us the communion of the blood of Christ.

9. All, therefore, which I can say is this : In any particular case, wait upon God by humble and earnest prayer, and then act according to the best light you have act according to what you are persuaded, upon the whole, will be most for your spiritual advantage. Take great care that you do not judge rashly , that you do not lightly think any to be false prophets : and when you have full proof, see that no anger or contempt have any place in your heart. After this, in the presence and in the fear of God, determine for yourself. I can only say, if by experience you find that the hearing them hurts your soul, then hear them not , then quietly refrain, and hear those that profit you. If, on the other hand, you find it does not hurt your soul, you then may hear them still. Only, ' take heed how you hear ' beware of them and of their doctrine. Hear

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It generally took the form of an exposition of the Lesson with appropriate exhortations. So both our Lord and St. Paul preached in the synagogues.

8. The Church has universally maintained that the Sacraments are

valid, quite apart from the character and intention of the administrator, since they derive their effect from the Holy Spirit, through the institution of Christ, received through the faith of the communicant.

with fear and trembling, lest you should be deceived, and given up, like them, to a strong delusion. As they continually mingle truth and lies, how easily may you take in both together ! Hear with fervent and continual prayer to Him who alone teacheth man wisdom. And see that you bring whatever you hear ' to the law and to the testimony.' Receive nothing untried, nothing till it is weighed in the balance of the sanctuary : believe nothing they say, unless it is clearly confirmed by [plain] passages of holy writ. Wholly reject whatsoever differs therefrom, whatever is not confirmed thereby. And, in particular, reject, with the utmost abhorrence, whatsoever is described as the way of salvation, that is either different from, or short of, the way our Lord has marked out in the foregoing discourse.

10. I cannot conclude without addressing a few plain words to those of whom we have now been speaking. O ye false prophets ! O ye dry bones ! hear ye, for once, the word of the Lord ! How long will ye lie in the name of God, saying, ' God hath spoken ! ' and God hath not spoken by you ? How long will ye pervert the right ways of the Lord, putting darkness for light, and light for darkness ? How long will ye teach the way of death, and call it the way of life ? How long will ye deliver to Satan the souls whom ye profess to bring unto God ?

11. ' Woe unto you, ye blind leaders of the blind ; for ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men. Ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.' Them that would ' strive to enter in at the strait gate,' ye call back into the broad way. Them that have scarce gone one step in the ways of God, you devilishly caution against going too far. Them that just begin to ' hunger and thirst after righteousness,' you warn not to ' be righteous overmuch.' Thus you cause them to stumble at the very threshold, yea, to fall and rise no more. O wherefore do ye this ? What profit is there in their blood, when they go down to the pit ? Miserable profit to you ! ' They shall perish in their iniquity ; but their blood will God require at your hands ! '

12. Where are your eyes ? Where is your understanding ?

Have ye deceived others, till you have deceived yourselves also? Who hath required this at your hands, to teach a way which ye never knew? Are you 'given up to' so 'strong a delusion,' that ye not only teach but 'believe a lie'? And can you possibly believe that God hath sent you? that ye are His messengers? Nay, if the Lord had sent you, the work of the Lord would prosper in your hand. As the Lord liveth, if ye were messengers of God, He would 'confirm the word of His messengers.' But the work of the Lord doth not prosper in your hand you bring no sinners to repentance. The Lord doth not confirm your word; for you save no souls from death.

13. How can you possibly evade the force of our Lord's words—so full, so strong, so express? How can ye evade knowing yourselves by your fruits—evil fruits of evil trees? And how should it be otherwise? 'Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?' Take this to yourselves, ye to whom it belongs! O ye barren trees, why cumber ye the ground? 'Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.' See ye not, that here is no exception? Take knowledge, then, ye are not good trees; for ye do not bring forth good fruit. 'But a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit', and so have ye done from the beginning. Your speaking, as from God, has only confirmed them that heard you in the tempers, if not works, of the devil. O take warning of Him in whose name ye speak, before the sentence He hath pronounced take place: 'Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.'

14. My dear brethren, harden not your hearts! You have too long shut your eyes against the light. Open them now before it is too late, before you are cast into outer darkness! Let not any temporal consideration weigh with you; for eternity is at stake. Ye have run before ye were sent. O go no farther! Do not persist to damn yourselves and them that hear you! You have no fruit of your labours. And why is this? Even because the Lord is not with you. But can you go this warfare at your own cost? It cannot be. Then humble yourselves before Him. Cry unto Him out of

the dust, that He may first quicken *thy* soul , give *thee* the faith that worketh by love , that is lowly and meek, pure and merciful, zealous of good works, rejoicing in tribulation, in reproach, in distress, in persecution for righteousness' sake ! So shall ' the Spirit of glory and of Christ rest upon thee,' and it shall appear that God hath sent thee. So shalt thou indeed ' do the work of an Evangelist, and make full proof of thy ministry.' So shall the word of God in thy mouth be ' an hammer that breaketh the rocks in pieces ' ! It shall then be known by thy fruits that thou art a prophet of the Lord, even by the children whom God hath given thee. And having ' turned many to righteousness,' thou shalt ' shine as the stars for ever and ever ! '

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14. The passage (1 Pet. iv. 14) reads, ' The Spirit of glory and of God.' There is no authority for the variant ' Christ ' ; it was probably a slip of memory on Wesley's part.

## SERMON XXVIII

### UPON OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT

#### DISCOURSE XIII

THIS sermon is recorded as having been preached at Bexley some time during January 1753. In *Journal*, Sunday, July 20, 1766, it is recorded : ' After preaching at eight, I went to St. Saviour-gate Church [in York]. Towards the close of the prayers the rector sent the sexton to tell me the pulpit was at my service. I preached on the conclusion of the Gospel for the day, " Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord," &c. I did not see one person laugh or smile, though we had an elegant congregation.' In an article on ' Methodism in York,' by Daniel M'Allum, in the *Methodist Magazine*, July 1827, he says : ' At that time the Rev. Mr. Cordeux was incumbent of the living of St. Saviour's ; and he warned his congregation against hearing " that vagabond Wesley preach." Mr. Wesley came to the city on a Saturday, preached in Peaseholme Green Chapel, and again on the Sunday morning ; in the forenoon of that day he went to St. Saviour's Church, dressed in his canonicals. The clergyman in the course of reading the prayers saw a stranger cleric, and sent an officer to invite him to take the pulpit. He accepted the invitation, and took his text from the Gospel of the day, Matt. vii. 21. After service the vicar asked the clerk if he knew who the stranger was. " Sir," said he, " he is the vagabond Wesley, of whom you warned us." " Aye indeed," was the reply, " we are trapped ; but never mind, we had a good sermon." The Dean heard of the affair, and threatened to lay a complaint before the Archbishop. Mr. Cordeux, afraid of the consequences, took an early opportunity, when some occasion brought him into the presence of his Grace, to tell him that he had allowed Mr. Wesley to occupy his pulpit. " And you did right," said the prelate. The matter of the complaint was never more heard of ; and Mr. Cordeux was so far from repenting of what he had done, that some years afterwards he made a second offer of his pulpit, and Mr. Wesley preached upon the eight Beatitudes. An aged disciple, who still remains, and who was present on this occasion, says that Mr. Wesley took occasion to remark on the words " Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of

heaven"—“Perhaps no man in England knows more of what this means than I do.”’ This second sermon, as appears from the *Journal*, was preached in the morning of Sunday, May 7, 1786.

Verses 21-3 are connected with the previous paragraph about false teachers, who are warned that even successful ministration in Christ's name will not admit them at last to heaven if they have not practised the righteousness set forth in the sermon as the sole condition of entrance. The final verses are the appropriate conclusion of the whole discourse.

The last sentence of I. 1, ‘Reader, if God hath ever blessed my word to thy soul, pray that He may be merciful to me a sinner,’ is obviously an addition to the sermon as preached, when Wesley prepared it for publication. What a human, genuine appeal it is! Here is no autocratic, self-satisfied ecclesiastic, but a diffident soul, conscious of its own failures and mistakes, and crying out for sympathy and love.

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*Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven ; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.*

*Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name ? and in Thy name have cast out devils ? and in Thy name done many wonderful works ?*

*And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you : depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.*

*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock : And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell not : for it was founded upon a rock.*

*And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand :*

*And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house ; and it fell : and great was the fall of it.*

—MATT. vii. 21-27.

1. OUR Divine Teacher, having declared the whole counsel of God with regard to the way of salvation, and observed the chief hindrances of those who desire to walk therein, now closes the whole with these weighty words. thereby, as it were, setting His seal to His prophecy, and impressing His whole authority on what He had delivered, that it might stand firm to all generations.

2. For thus saith the Lord, that none may ever conceive there is any other way than this, 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore, every one that heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell and great was the fall of it.'

3. I design, in the following discourse, first, to consider the case of him who thus builds his house upon the sand: secondly, to show the wisdom of him who builds upon a rock: and, thirdly, to conclude with a practical application.

I. 1. And, first, I am to consider the case of him who builds his house upon the sand. It is concerning him our Lord saith, 'Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' And this is a decree which cannot pass, which standeth fast for ever and ever. It therefore imports us in the highest degree, thoroughly to understand the force of these words. Now, what are we to understand by that expression, 'That saith unto Me, Lord, Lord'? It undoubtedly means, *that thinks of going to heaven by any other way than that which I have now described*. It therefore implies (to begin at the lowest point) all good words, all verbal religion. It includes whatever creeds we may rehearse, whatever professions of faith we make, what-

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I. par. 1. This definition of him 'that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord,' is not too clearly expressed. It is intended as the definition of the man who says, 'Lord, Lord,' but nevertheless, fails to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. The mere pro-

fession of Christianity, however much accompanied by the outward manifestations mentioned in this and the following sections, is useless without the change of heart which results in the righteousness described in the foregoing parts of the Sermon.

ever number of prayers we may repeat, whatever thanksgivings we read or say to God. We may speak good of His name, and declare His lovingkindness to the children of men. We may be talking of all His mighty acts, and telling of His salvation from day to day. By comparing spiritual things with spiritual, we may show the meaning of the oracles of God. We may explain the mysteries of His kingdom, which have been hid from the beginning of the world. We may speak with the tongue of angels, rather than men, concerning the deep things of God. We may proclaim to sinners, 'Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world!' Yea, we may do this with such a measure of the power of God, and such demonstration of His Spirit, as to save many souls from death, and hide a multitude of sins. And yet it is very possible, all this may be no more than saying, 'Lord, Lord.' After I have thus successfully preached to others, still I myself may be a castaway. I may, in the hand of God, snatch many souls from hell, and yet drop into it when I have done. I may bring many others to the kingdom of heaven, and yet myself never enter there. Reader, if God hath ever blessed my word to *thy* soul, pray that He may be merciful to *me* a sinner!

2. The saying, 'Lord, Lord,' may, secondly, imply the doing no harm. We may abstain from every presumptuous sin, from every kind of outward wickedness. We may refrain from all those ways of acting or speaking which are forbidden in holy writ. We may be able to say to all those among whom we live, 'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' We may have a conscience void of any external offence, towards God and towards man. We may be clear of all uncleanness, ungodliness, and unrighteousness, as to the outward act, or (as the Apostle testifies concerning himself), 'touching the righteousness of the law,' that is, outward righteousness, 'blameless.' But yet we are not hereby justified. Still this is no more than saying, 'Lord, Lord'; and if we go no farther than this, we shall never 'enter into the kingdom of heaven.'

3. The saying, 'Lord, Lord,' may imply, thirdly, many

of what are usually styled good works. A man may attend the supper of the Lord, may hear abundance of excellent sermons, and omit no opportunity of partaking all the other ordinances of God. I may do good to my neighbour, deal my bread to the hungry, and cover the naked with a garment. I may be so zealous of good works as even to 'give all my goods to feed the poor.' Yea, and I may do all this with a desire to please God, and a real belief that I do please Him thereby (which is undeniably the case of those our Lord introduces, saying unto Him, 'Lord, Lord'); and still I may have no part in the glory which shall be revealed.

4. If any man marvels at this, let him acknowledge he is a stranger to the whole religion of Jesus Christ, and, in particular, to that perfect portraiture thereof which He has set before us in this discourse. For how far short is all this of that righteousness and true holiness which He has described therein! How widely distant from that inward kingdom of heaven which is now opened in the believing soul!—which is first sown in the heart as a grain of mustard-seed, but afterwards putteth forth great branches, on which grow all the fruits of righteousness, every good temper, and word, and work.

5. Yet as clearly as He had declared this, as frequently as He had repeated, that none who have not this kingdom of God within them shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, our Lord well knew, that many would not receive this saying, and therefore confirms it yet again: 'Many' (saith He: not one; not a few only; it is not a rare or an uncommon case) 'shall say unto Me in that day,' not only, We have said many prayers; We have spoken Thy praise; We have refrained from evil, We have exercised ourselves in doing good,—but, what is abundantly more than this, 'We have prophesied in Thy name; in Thy name have we cast out devils; in Thy name done many wonderful works.' 'We have prophesied,'—we have declared Thy will to mankind; we have showed sinners the way to peace and glory. And we have done this 'in Thy name,' according to the truth of Thy gospel, yea, and by Thy authority, who didst confirm the word with the Holy Ghost

sent down from heaven. For in or by Thy name, by the power of Thy Word and of Thy Spirit, 'have we cast out devils'; out of the souls which they had long claimed as their own, and whereof they had full and quiet possession. 'And in Thy name,' by Thy power, not our own, 'have we done many wonderful works'; insomuch that 'even the dead heard the voice of the Son of God' speaking by us, and lived. 'And then will I profess' even 'unto them, I never knew you'; no, not then, when you were 'casting out devils in My name'; even then I did not know you as My own, for your heart was not right toward God. Ye were not yourselves meek and lowly; ye were not lovers of God, and of all mankind; ye were not renewed in the image of God; ye were not holy as I am holy. 'Depart from Me, ye' who, notwithstanding all this, are 'workers of iniquity';—*ἀνομία*: ye are transgressors of My law, My law of holy and perfect love.

6. It is to put this beyond all possibility of contradiction, that our Lord confirms it by that apposite comparison: 'Every one,' saith He, 'who heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house'—as they will surely do, sooner or later, upon every soul of man; even the floods of outward affliction, or inward temptation; the storms of pride, anger, fear, or desire—'and it fell: and great was the fall of it'; so that it perished for ever and ever. Such must be the portion of all who rest in anything short of that religion which is above described. And the greater will their fall be, because they 'heard those sayings, and' yet 'did them not.'

II. 1. I am, secondly, to show the wisdom of him that doeth them, that buildeth his house upon a rock. He indeed is wise, 'who doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven.' He is truly wise, whose 'righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.' He is poor in spirit, knowing himself even as also he is known. He sees and feels all his sin, and all his guilt, till it is washed away by the

atoning blood. He is conscious of his lost estate, of the wrath of God abiding on him, and of his utter inability to help himself, till he is filled with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. He is meek and gentle, patient toward all men, never 'returning evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing,' till he overcomes evil with good. His soul is athirst for nothing on earth, but only for God, the living God. He has bowels of love for all mankind, and is ready to lay down his life for his enemies. He loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his mind, and soul, and strength. He alone shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, who, in this spirit, doeth good unto all men; and who, being for this cause despised and rejected of men, being hated, reproached, and persecuted, rejoices and is 'exceeding glad,' knowing in whom he hath believed, and being assured these light, momentary afflictions will 'work out for him an eternal weight of glory.'

2. How truly wise is this man! He knows himself: an everlasting spirit, which came forth from God, and was sent down into an house of clay, not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. He knows the world: the place in which he is to pass a few days or years, not as an inhabitant, but as a stranger and sojourner, in his way to the everlasting habitations; and accordingly he uses the world as not abusing it, and as knowing the fashion of it passes away. He knows God: his Father and his Friend, the parent of all good, the centre of the spirits of all flesh, the sole happiness of all intelligent beings. He sees, clearer than the light of the noon-day sun, that this is the end of man, to glorify Him who made him for Himself, and to love and enjoy Him for ever. And with equal clearness he sees the means to that end, to the enjoyment of God in glory, even now to know, to love, to

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II. 2. 'As not abusing it'; rather, as the R.V. has it, 'not using it to the full'; not regarding this world and its pursuits and pleasures as something which has to be made the most of, to be treated as the serious business of life. As the next words imply, it is only a passing scene upon

the stage, and the scene will soon be shifted.

'To glorify Him,' &c. A manifest reference to the first answer in the Shorter Catechism of the Westminster Assembly: 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever.'

imitate God, and to believe in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.

3. He is a wise man, even in God's account, for 'he buildeth his house upon a rock'; upon the Rock of Ages, the everlasting Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ. Fitly is He so called: for He changeth not: He is 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' To Him both the men of God of old, and the Apostle citing His words, bear witness 'Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Thine hands. They shall perish; but Thou remainest: and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt Thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same, and Thy years shall not fail' (Heb. i. 10-12). Wise, therefore, is the man who buildeth on Him; who layeth Him for his only foundation; who builds only upon His blood and righteousness, upon what He hath done and suffered for us. On this corner-stone he fixes his faith, and rests the whole weight of his soul upon it. He is taught of God to say, 'Lord, I have sinned! I deserve the nethermost hell; but I am justified freely by Thy grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and the life I now live, I live by faith in Him, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. The life I now live; namely, a divine, heavenly life; a life which is hid with Christ in God. I now live, even in the flesh, a life of love; of pure love both to God and man, a life of holiness and happiness; praising God, and doing all things to His glory.'

4. Yet, let not such an one think that he shall not see war any more, that he is now out of the reach of temptation. It still remains for God to prove the grace He hath given: he shall be tried as gold in the fire. He shall be tempted not less than they who know not God perhaps abundantly more; for Satan will not fail to try to the uttermost those whom he is not able to destroy. Accordingly, 'the rain' will impetuously descend; only at such times and in such manner as seems good, not to the prince of the power of the air, but to

4. 'The prince of the power of the air.' This title for the Devil is from Eph. ii. 2. St. Paul accepts the current Jewish belief that the atmo-

Him 'whose kingdom ruleth over all.' 'The floods,' or torrents, will come; they will lift up their waves and rage horribly. But to them also, the Lord that sitteth above the water-floods, that remaineth a King for ever, will say, 'Hitherto shall ye come, and no farther: here shall your proud waves be stayed.' 'The winds will blow, and beat upon that house,' as though they would tear it up from the foundation: but they cannot prevail: it falleth not; for it is founded upon a rock. He buildeth on Christ by faith and love; therefore, he shall not be cast down. He 'shall not fear though the earth be moved, and though the hills be carried into the midst of the sea.' 'Though the waters thereof rage and swell, and the mountains shake at the tempest of the same'; still he 'dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, and is safe under the shadow of the Almighty.'

III. 1. How nearly then does it concern every child of man, practically to apply these things to himself, diligently to examine on what foundation he builds, whether on a rock or on the sand! How deeply are *you* concerned to inquire, 'What is the foundation of *my* hope? Whereon do I build my expectation of entering into the kingdom of heaven? Is it not built on the sand? upon my *orthodoxy*, or right opinions, which, by a gross abuse of words, I have called *faith*? upon

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sphere was the home of the evil spirits. The title 'prince' implies a certain authority in the Devil; compare our Lord's phrase 'the Prince of this world.' That the Devil has some sort of authority over the affairs of the world is shown by his claim as to the kingdoms of the world: 'It hath been delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it'—a claim which our Lord does not contradict (Luke iv. 6). This power is due to the sins of men, which are used by the Devil to carry out his plans; as in the recent Great War, the Devil's masterpiece of

fiendish cruelty and horror. There is much in the condition of the world to justify a kind of Zoroastrian dualism; that there is a power working for evil, and permitted so to work, can hardly be denied. But we cannot admit that the result of the conflict between Good and Evil can ever be in doubt; though we are often constrained to cry, 'Lord, how long shall the wicked triumph?'

III. 1. The description of the 'Almost Christian' in Sermon II should be compared with this and the following sections.

my having a set of notions, supposed more rational or scriptural than [many] others have?' Alas! what madness is this! Surely this is building on the sand, or, rather, on the froth of the sea! Say, I am convinced of this: 'Am I not, again, building my hope on what is equally unable to support it? Perhaps on my belonging to "so excellent a Church; reformed after the true Scripture model; blessed with the purest doctrine, the most primitive Liturgy, the most apostolical form of government!"' These are, doubtless, so many reasons for praising God, as they may be so many helps to holiness; but they are not holiness itself: and if they are separate from it, they will profit me nothing; nay, they will leave me the more without excuse, and exposed to the greater damnation. Therefore, if I build my hope upon this foundation, I am still building upon the sand.

2. You cannot, you dare not, rest here. Upon what next will you build your hope of salvation?—upon your innocence? upon your doing no harm? your not wronging or hurting any one? Well; allow this plea to be true. You are just in all your dealings; you are a downright honest man; you pay every man his own; you neither cheat nor extort; you act fairly with all mankind; and you have a conscience towards God; you do not live in any known sin. Thus far is well but still it is not the thing. You may go thus far, and yet never come to heaven. When all this harmlessness flows from a right principle, it is the *least part* of the religion of Christ. But in you it does not flow from a right principle, and therefore is no part at all of religion. So that in grounding your hope of salvation on this, you are still building upon the sand.

3. Do you go farther yet? Do you add to the doing no harm, the attending all the ordinances of God? Do you, at all opportunities, partake of the Lord's supper? use public

2. It is surely not right to speak of a moral life such as is here described as 'the least part of the religion of Christ.' Our Lord came 'to save His people from their sins'; He does so by working in

them through faith in His atoning death a change of heart; but the object of this new experience is not the experience itself, but the resulting deliverance from sin.

and private prayer? fast often? hear and search the Scriptures, and meditate thereon? These things, likewise, ought you to have done, from the time you first set your face towards heaven. Yet these things also are nothing, being alone. They are nothing without 'the weightier matters of the law.' And those you have forgotten, at least, you experience them not: faith, mercy, and the love of God, holiness of heart; heaven opened in the soul. Still, therefore, you build upon the sand.

4. Over and above all this, are you zealous of good works? Do you, as you have time, do good to all men? Do you feed the hungry, and clothe the naked, and visit the fatherless and widow in their affliction? Do you visit those that are sick? relieve them that are in prison? Is any a stranger, and you take him in? Friend, come up higher! Do you 'prophesy' in the 'name' of Christ? Do you preach the truth as it is in Jesus? And does the influence of His Spirit attend your word, and make it the power of God unto salvation? Does He enable you to bring sinners from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God? Then go and learn what thou hast so often taught, 'By grace are ye saved through faith', 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of His own mercy He saveth us.' Learn to hang naked upon the cross of Christ, counting all thou hast done but dung and dross! Apply to Him just in the spirit of the dying thief, of the harlot with her seven devils! else thou art still on the sand; and, after saving others, thou wilt lose thy own soul.

5. Lord, increase my faith, if I now believe! else, give me faith, though but as a grain of mustard-seed!—But 'what doth it profit, if a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can' that 'faith save him'? O no! That faith which hath not works, which doth not produce both inward and outward holiness, which does not stamp the whole image of God on the heart, and purify us as He is pure; that faith which does not produce the whole of the religion described in the fore-

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5. 'Faith as a grain of mustard seed'; that is, faith which, however small, has in it vitality and therefore

the power to grow and develop. Our Lord does not say 'Faith as a grain of sand.'

going chapters, is not the faith of the gospel, not the Christian faith, not the faith which leads to glory. O beware of this, above all other snares of the devil,—of resting on unholy, unsaving faith ! If thou layest stress on this, thou art lost for ever : thou still buildest thy house upon the sand. When ‘the rain descends, and the floods come,’ it will surely fall, ‘and great will be the fall of it.’

6. Now, therefore, build thou upon a rock. By the grace of God, know thyself. Know and feel that thou wast shapen in wickedness, and in sin did thy mother conceive thee, and that thou thyself hast been heaping sin upon sin, ever since thou couldest discern good from evil. Own thyself guilty of eternal death ; and renounce all hope of ever being able to save thyself. Be it all thy hope, to be washed in His blood, and purified by His Spirit, ‘who Himself bore’ all ‘thy sins in His own body upon the tree.’ And if thou knowest He hath taken away thy sins, so much the more abase thyself before Him, in a continual sense of thy total dependence on Him for every good thought, and word, and work, and of thy utter inability to all good unless He ‘water thee every moment.’

7. Now weep for your sins, and mourn after God, till He turns your heaviness into joy. And even then weep with them that weep ; and for them that weep not for themselves. Mourn for the sins and miseries of mankind ; and see, but just before your eyes, the immense ocean of eternity, without a bottom or a shore, which has already swallowed up millions of millions of men, and is gaping to devour them that yet remain ! See here, the house of God eternal in the heavens ! there, hell and destruction without a covering !—and thence learn the importance of every moment, which just appears, and is gone for ever !

8. Now add to your seriousness, meekness of wisdom. Hold an even scale as to all your passions, but in particular, as to anger, sorrow, and fear. Calmly acquiesce in whatsoever is the will of God. Learn in every state wherein you are, therewith to be content. Be mild to the good : be gentle toward all men ; but especially toward the evil and the unthankful. Beware, not only of outward expressions

of anger, such as calling thy brother, *Raca*, or *Thou fool* ; but of every inward emotion contrary to love, though it go no farther than the heart. Be angry at sin, as an affront offered to the Majesty of heaven ; but love the sinner still : like our Lord, who ' looked round about upon the Pharisees with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.' He was grieved at the sinners, angry at the sin. Thus be thou ' angry, and sin not ' !

9. Now do thou hunger and thirst, not for ' the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life.' Trample under foot the world, and the things of the world , all these riches, honours, pleasures. What is the world to thee ? Let the dead bury their dead , but follow thou after the image of God. And beware of quenching that blessed thirst, if it is already excited in thy soul, by what is vulgarly called religion ; a poor, dull farce, a religion of form, of outside show, which leaves the heart still cleaving to the dust, as earthly and sensual as ever. Let nothing satisfy thee but the power of godliness, but a religion that is spirit and life ; the dwelling in God and God in thee , the being an inhabitant of eternity ; the entering in by the blood of sprinkling ' within the veil,' and ' sitting in heavenly places with Christ Jesus ' !

10. Now, seeing thou canst do all things through Christ strengthening thee, be merciful as thy Father in heaven is merciful ! Love thy neighbour as thyself ! Love friends and enemies as thy own soul : and let thy love be long-suffering and patient towards all men. Let it be kind, soft, benign ; inspiring thee with the most amiable sweetness, and the most fervent and tender affection. Let it rejoice in the truth wheresoever it is found ; the truth that is after godliness. Enjoy whatsoever brings glory to God, and promotes peace and good-will among men. In love, cover all things : of the dead and the absent speaking nothing but good ; believe all things which may any way tend to clear your neighbour's character ; hope all things in his favour , and endure all

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10. ' Of the dead,' &c. ; better known in the Latin form, ' De mortuis et absentibus nil nisi bonum.'

things, triumphing over all opposition : for true love never faileth, in time or in eternity.

11. Now be thou pure in heart ; purified through faith from every unholy affection ; ‘cleansing thyself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the fear of God.’ Being, through the power of His grace, purified from pride, by deep poverty of spirit ; from anger, from every unkind or turbulent passion, by meekness and mercifulness ; from every desire but to please and enjoy God, by hunger and thirst after righteousness ; now love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy strength !

12. In a word : let thy religion be the religion of the heart. Let it lie deep in thy inmost soul. Be thou little, and base, and mean, and vile (beyond what words can express) in thy own eyes, amazed and humbled to the dust by the love of God which is in Christ Jesus. Be serious. Let the whole stream of thy thoughts, words, and actions flow from the deepest conviction that thou standest on the edge of the great gulf, thou and all the children of men, just ready to drop in, either into everlasting glory or everlasting burnings ! Let thy soul be filled with mildness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering towards all men ; at the same time that all which is in thee is athirst for God, the living God, longing to awake up after His likeness and to be satisfied with it ! Be thou a lover of God and of all mankind ! In this spirit do and suffer all things ! Thus show thy faith by thy works, thus ‘do the will of thy Father which is in heaven’ ! And, as sure as thou now walkest with God on earth, thou shalt also reign with Him in glory !

## SERMON XXIX

### THE ORIGINAL, NATURE, PROPERTY, AND USE OF THE LAW

THIS and the two following sermons are part of Wesley's polemic against the Antinomianism which made such havoc in his Societies in the forties. See introduction to Sermons XII and XLIX. The chief exponents of the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ, and the freedom of the believer from the law, were Count Zinzendorf and his Moravian followers, Molther and Spangenberg; the Rev. William Cudworth, who was at this time connected with Whitefield, but afterwards became minister of the Independent Chapel in Margaret Street, London, and (under Cudworth's influence) the Rev. James Hervey. Their doctrinal views were capable of an interpretation which was in harmony with holiness of life, although they maintained that this holiness was imputed and not inherent; and Wesley himself admits in the conclusion of the *Second Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend*, and in Sermon XLIX, that the controversy between himself and them was to some extent at least 'a strife about words.' But to preach to unlettered and ignorant Christians that they were 'free from the law' inevitably led to the most monstrous practical abuses; and some of them claimed even freedom to take the property of others and to commit adultery, to say nothing of other sins, such as gluttony, drunkenness, idleness, and the like. It was this tendency of the Moravian doctrines that provoked the righteous indignation of Wesley, and infused his pamphlets and sermons against them with a white-hot passion which sometimes degenerated into personal abuse. Thus at the end of the *First Dialogue between an Antinomian and his Friend*, he says: 'What does all this come to at the last? A mere, empty "strife of words." All that is really uncommon in your doctrine is a heap of broad absurdities, in most of which you grossly contradict yourselves, as well as Scripture and common sense. In the meantime, you boast and vapour, as if "ye were the men, and wisdom should die with you." I pray God to "humble you, and prove you, and show you what is in your hearts"!' He was especially incensed against Cudworth, of whom he says in his *Journal*, April 27, 1759, 'He is as incapable as a brute beast of being convinced even in the smallest point.' Cudworth was

not behindhand in strong language; he avowed that he abhorred Wesley 'as much as he did the Pope, and ten times more than he did the devil.' Happily these sermons are free from any abuse of this sort, and deal with the question in dispute in a judicial temper, and with sound and convincing logic.

In studying them, it would be well for the reader to peruse the two Dialogues already mentioned. The first was published early in 1745; the tenets of the Antinomian are given in the exact language used by Zinzendorf in the well-known Latin dialogue with Wesley, transcribed in the *Journal*, September 3, 1741, and by other Moravian writers. 'The words,' Wesley says in a footnote, 'are transcribed from late authors. I am not willing to name them.' This pamphlet was at once answered by Cudworth in a *Dialogue between a Preacher of Inherent Righteousness and a Preacher of God's Righteousness*, and Wesley responded in the *Second Dialogue*, also published in 1745, in which Cudworth is quoted throughout by name. At the Conference of this year at Bristol, it was asked, 'What can we do to stop the progress of Antinomianism?' and the answer was, 'Write one or two more dialogues': the *Second Dialogue* was the result. These three sermons were apparently written either at Kingswood in November or at his friend Charles Greenwood's at Stoke Newington, in December 1749 (*Journal*, October 30 and December 11, 1749). Mr. Greenwood was one of the first trustees of Wesley's New Chapel in City Road; his house was still standing in 1915, and a photograph of it may be seen in the Standard Edition of the *Journal*, vi. 393. They were evidently intended rather for publication than preaching; and I have not found any record of any one of them being actually delivered; though no doubt the substance of them was given in the study of Rom. vii. with the Bands in Bristol on Tuesday, November 18, 1740; and of Romans iii. at Short's Gardens, London, on November 24 of the same year. They were first published in Vol. III of the Sermons, 1750; and the next year they appeared separately from the rest of the volume in pamphlet form.

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*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*—ROM. vii. 12.

I. PERHAPS there are few subjects within the whole compass of religion so little understood as this. The reader of this Epistle is usually told, by 'the law' St. Paul means the Jewish

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<p>Par. 1. In the Epistle to the Romans, when St. Paul uses the phrase 'The law' (<i>ὁ νόμος</i>) he means</p>	<p>the Mosaic law; when he uses 'law' (<i>νόμος</i>) without the article, he means law in general, including the</p>
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law ; and so, apprehending himself to have no concern therewith, passes on without farther thought about it. Indeed some are not satisfied with this account , but observing the Epistle is directed to the Romans, thence infer that the Apostle in the beginning of this chapter alludes to the old Roman law. But as they have no more concern with this, than with the ceremonial law of Moses, so they spend not much thought on what they suppose is occasionally mentioned barely to illustrate another thing.

2. But a careful observer of the Apostle's discourse will not be content with these light explications of it. And the more he weighs the words, the more convinced he will be, that St. Paul, by 'the law' mentioned in this chapter, does not mean either the ancient law of Rome, or the ceremonial law of Moses. This will clearly appear to all who attentively consider the tenor of his discourse. He begins the chapter, 'Know ye not, brethren (for I speak to them that know the law),' to them who have been instructed therein from their youth, 'that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?' (What ! the law of Rome only, or the ceremonial law ? No, surely , but the moral law.) 'For,' to give a plain instance, 'the woman which hath an husband is bound by the ' moral ' law to her husband so long as he liveth , but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married

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Mosaic and all other systems of law. In no case is there any specific reference to Roman law, as distinct from other codes. The Apostle's idea is that, up to the coming of the Messiah, all the world, Gentiles and Jews alike, was under a legal system of some sort ; of which the Mosaic was a typical, and to his readers the most familiar example. There is no distinction anywhere between the ceremonial and the moral parts of the Mosaic law.

2. Only in one point does Wesley's exegesis require some correction.

The main difficulty is to determine what is meant by the husband whose death frees the wife from 'the statute "Of a husband."' Wesley takes it to be the law ; 'the whole institution being now as it were dead.' But it is hard to see how the law of the husband can be identified with the husband. Gifford's interpretation seems to be the best. According to him, the wife is the true self, the ego ; that self which in verse 22 is said to delight in the law of God. The first husband, who dies, is 'the old man,' the carnal

to another man, she shall be called an adulteress : but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law : so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.' From this particular instance the Apostle proceeds to draw that general conclusion : ' Wherefore, my brethren,' by a plain parity of reason, ' ye also are become dead to the law,' the whole Mosaic institution, ' by the body of Christ,' offered for you, and bringing you under a new dispensation : ' That ye should ' without any blame ' be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead ', and hath thereby given proof of His authority to make the change ; ' that we should bring forth fruit unto God.' And this we can do now, whereas before we could not ' for when we were in the flesh '—under the power of the flesh, that is, of corrupt nature, which was necessarily the case till we knew the power of Christ's resurrection, ' the motions of sins, which were by the law '—which were shown and inflamed by the Mosaic law, not conquered, ' did work in our members '—broke out various ways, ' to bring forth fruit unto death.' ' But now we are delivered from the law ' ; from that whole moral, as well as ceremonial economy ; ' that being dead whereby we were held '—that entire institution being now as it were dead, and having no more authority over us than the husband, when dead, hath over his wife : ' That we should serve Him '—who died for us and rose again, ' in newness of spirit '—in a new spiritual dispensation ; ' and not in the oldness of the letter '

nature, with which the true self is so united in the natural state that it is brought into bondage to the law of sin in the members. The second husband, to whom after the death of the first the true self is united, is Christ. The better translation of verse 6 is, as in the R.V., ' But now we have been discharged from the law, having died ' (i.e. our old self having died) ' to that wherein we were held.' It may of course be also said that the law itself is dead, or inoperative, through the death of the person to whom it applies ; but

this is a secondary application of the metaphor. Dr. Beet's interpretation substantially agrees with this ; though he takes the dead husband to mean Sin. The following part of the chapter, however, in which the duality of the unregenerate nature is so vividly portrayed, favours the more definite identification of the husband with the flesh, the body of this death, which dies with Christ when by faith we become united with Him in the likeness of His death.

—with a bare outward service, according to the letter of the Mosaic institution (verses 1–6).

3. The Apostle, having gone thus far in proving that the Christian had set aside the Jewish dispensation, and that the moral law itself, though it could never pass away, yet stood on a different foundation from what it did before,—now stops to propose and answer an objection: ‘What shall we say then? Is the law sin?’ So some might infer from a misapprehension of those words, ‘the motions of sins, which were by the law.’ ‘God forbid!’ saith the Apostle, that we should say so. Nay, the law is an irreconcilable enemy to sin; searching it out, wherever it is. ‘I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust,’ evil desire, to be sin, ‘except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet’ (verse 7). After opening this farther, in the four following verses, he subjoins this general conclusion, with regard more especially to the moral law, from which the preceding instance was taken ‘Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.’

4. In order to explain and enforce these deep words, so little regarded, because so little understood, I shall endeavour to show, first, the original of this law; secondly, the nature thereof; thirdly, the properties—that it is holy, and just, and good; and, fourthly, the uses of it.

I. 1. I shall, first, endeavour to show the original of the moral law, often called ‘the law,’ by way of eminence. Now this is not, as some may have possibly imagined, of so late an institution as the time of Moses. Noah declared it to men

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3. The meaning is not exactly ‘God forbid that we should say so.’ The Greek is *μὴ γένοιτο*, a phrase which occurs fourteen times in St. Paul’s epistles and once in St. Luke. Curiously, it is the only case of the optative mood having survived in modern Greek; Dr. J. H. Moulton compares the survival in English of the subjunctive in such phrases as ‘Be it so!’ It means literally ‘Let

it not be so!’ but practically it is synonymous with ‘impossible!’ ‘absurd!’

I. 1. In 2 Pet. ii. 5 Noah is called ‘a herald of righteousness.’ This was the Jewish tradition; Josephus, *Ant.* i. 3, says that he tried to move men to repentance; and in the *Sibylline Oracles*, i. 128, he is said to have proclaimed (heralded) repentance to all the peoples that they

long before that time, and Enoch before him. But we may trace its original higher still, even beyond the foundation of the world : to that period, unknown indeed to men, but doubtless enrolled in the annals of eternity, when ' the morning stars ' first ' sang together,' being newly called into existence. It pleased the great Creator to make these, His first-born sons, intelligent beings, that they might know Him that created them. For this end He endued them with understanding, to discern truth from falsehood, good from evil ; and, as a necessary result of this, with liberty, a capacity of choosing the one and refusing the other. By this they were, likewise, enabled to offer Him a free and willing service ; a service rewardable in itself, as well as most acceptable to their gracious Master.

2. To employ all the faculties which He had given them, particularly their understanding and liberty, He gave them a law, a complete model of all truth, so far as is intelligible to a finite being ; and of all good, so far as angelic minds were capable of embracing it. It was also the design of their beneficent Governor herein to make way for a continual increase of their happiness, seeing every instance of obedience to that law would both add to the perfection of their nature, and entitle them to an higher reward, which the righteous Judge would give in its season.

3. In like manner, when God, in His appointed time, had created a new order of intelligent beings, when He had raised man from the dust of the earth, breathed into him the breath of life, and caused him to become a living soul, endued with power to choose good or evil ; he gave to this free, intelligent

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might be saved ; and fifty lines are devoted to a report of his sermon.

Jude (verse 14) quotes a prophecy of Enoch, taken from the (apocryphal) Book of Enoch i. 9.

Little has been revealed to us of the origin and condition of angels ; but it can hardly be disputed that whenever it pleased God to create any order of intelligent and moral beings, He must have implanted within them a principle of duty, and

a knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong, essentially the same as the moral law which we recognize ; for both are based on His own moral character.

3. It cannot be supposed for a moment that Man in his primitive condition before the Fall had a full knowledge of the moral law, even in so far as it was afterwards expressed in the Decalogue, still less as it was revealed by our Lord. What made

creature the same law as to His first-born children,—not wrote, indeed, upon tables of stone, or any corruptible substance, but engraven on his heart by the finger of God ; wrote in the inmost spirit both of men and of angels , to the intent it might never be far off, never hard to be understood, but always at hand, and always shining with clear light, even as the sun in the midst of heaven.

4. Such was the original of the law of God. With regard to man, it was coeval with his nature ; but with regard to the elder sons of God, it shone in its full splendour ‘ or ever the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the round world were made.’ But it was not long before man rebelled against God, and, by breaking this glorious law, wellnigh effaced it out of his heart , the eyes of his understanding being darkened in the same measure as his soul was ‘ alienated from the life of God.’ And yet God did not despise the work of His own hands ; but, being reconciled to man through the Son of His love, He, in some measure, re-inscribed the law on the heart of His dark, sinful creature. ‘ He ’ again ‘ showed thee, O man, what is good,’ although not as in the beginning, ‘ even to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.’

5. And this He showed, not only to our first parents, but likewise to all their posterity, by ‘ that true light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world.’ But, notwithstanding this light, all flesh had, in process of time, ‘ corrupted their way before Him ’ ; till He chose out of mankind a peculiar people, to whom He gave a more perfect know-

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him a man was the ‘emergence of the sense of duty and of personality, with the power of free choice between obedience to the new law of right and the gratifying of the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Whilst the law of right must have been in harmony with the character of the righteous God, so far as it went, Dr. W. B. Pope (*Theology*, ii. 13) is clear that ‘Nothing is said concerning the degree of knowledge imparted

to Adam and Eve as to the nature, terms, and limits of their probationary estate. The so-called Covenant of Works has no place in the history of Paradise.’ See introduction to Sermon V. and notes.

5. This verse, John i. 9, is fundamental in Wesley’s theology. He avoided Pelagianism by his definite teaching that through the Fall man became totally depraved, dead in trespasses and sins, without any

ledge of His law ; and the heads of this, because they were slow of understanding, He wrote on two tables of stone, which He commanded the fathers to teach their children, through all succeeding generations.

6. And thus it is, that the law of God is now made known to them that know not God. They hear, with the hearing of the ear, the things that were written aforetime for our instruction. But this does not suffice : they cannot, by this means, comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. God alone can reveal this by His Spirit. And so He does to all that truly believe, in consequence of that gracious promise made to all the Israel of God : ' Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel. And this shall be the covenant that I will make ; I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people ' (Jer. xxxi. 31, &c.).

II. 1. The nature of that law which was originally given to angels in heaven and man in paradise, and which God has so mercifully promised to write afresh in the hearts of all true believers, was the second thing I proposed to show. In order to which, I would first observe, that although the 'law' and the 'commandment' are sometimes differently taken (the commandment meaning but a part of the law), yet in the text they are used as equivalent terms, implying

power to resist temptation or to turn to God ; but he also avoided Calvinism by his doctrine of prevenient grace, to wit, that the Holy Spirit is given to every man to reveal to him his duty and to give him power to turn to God for help and salvation. This free gift, he taught, comes upon ALL men unto justification of life ; and this true light enlightens every man that cometh into the world. The alternative translation of this passage, adopted by the R.V., 'There was the true light, even the light which lighteth

every man, coming into the world,' does not at all weaken the teaching drawn from the text by Wesley. The essential point is that the true light 'lighteth every man,' however we may connect the last clause.

II. 1. 'The law' is the whole Mosaic system, 'the commandment' a specific injunction in the law. This view that 'the ceremonial law has no place in the present question' is undoubtedly right, and shows a great advance on the earlier opinion of Wesley as expressed in Sermon XX, section I.

one and the same thing. But we cannot understand here, either by one or the other, the ceremonial law. It is not the ceremonial law, whereof the Apostle says, in the words above recited, 'I had not known sin, but by the law' this is too plain to need a proof. Neither is it the ceremonial law which saith, in the words immediately subjoined, 'Thou shalt not covet.' Therefore the ceremonial law has no place in the present question.

2. Neither can we understand by 'the law' mentioned in the text the Mosaic dispensation. It is true, the word is sometimes so understood; as when the Apostle says, speaking to the Galatians (iii. 17), 'The covenant that was confirmed before'; namely, with Abraham, the father of the faithful, 'the law,' that is, the Mosaic dispensation, 'which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul.' But it cannot be so understood in the text, for the Apostle never bestows so high commendations as these upon that imperfect and shadowy dispensation. He nowhere affirms the Mosaic to be a spiritual law; or, that it is holy, and just, and good. Neither is it true, that God will write that law in the hearts of those whose iniquities He remembers no more. It remains, that 'the law,' eminently so termed, is no other than the moral law.

3. Now, this law is an incorruptible picture of the High and Holy ONE that inhabiteth eternity. It is He whom, in His essence, no man hath seen, or can see, made visible to men and angels. It is the face of God unveiled; God manifested to His creatures as they are able to bear it, manifested to give, and not to destroy, life—that they may see God and live. It is the heart of God disclosed to man. Yea, in some sense, we may apply to this law what the Apostle says of His Son: it is *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης, καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ*—*the streaming forth or out-beaming of His glory, the express image of His person.*

4. 'If virtue,' said the ancient Heathen, 'could assume such a shape as that we could behold her with our eyes, what

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4. Plato, in *Phaedrus* 250 D, says *ἐρωτας, εἴ τι τοιοῦτον ἐαυτῆς ἐναργές* of τὸ κάλλος 'δεινούς γὰρ ἂν παρῆχεν *εἰδῶλον παρῆχετο εἰς ὅψιν ἰόν.'* Cicero

wonderful love would she excite in us ! ' If virtue could do this ! It is done already. The law of God is all virtues in one, in such a shape as to be beheld with open face by all those whose eyes God hath enlightened. What is the law but divine virtue and wisdom assuming a visible form ? What is it but the original ideas of truth and good, which were lodged in the uncreated mind from eternity, now drawn forth and clothed with such a vehicle as to appear even to human understanding.

5. If we survey the law of God in another point of view, it is supreme, unchangeable reason, it is unalterable rectitude ; it is the everlasting fitness of all things that are or ever were created. I am sensible, what a shortness, and even impropriety, there is, in these and all other human expressions, when we endeavour by these faint pictures to shadow out the deep things of God. Nevertheless, we have no better, indeed no other way, during this our infant state of existence. As we now ' know ' but ' in part,' so we are constrained to ' prophesy,' that is, speak of the things of God, ' in part ' also. ' We cannot order our speech by reason of darkness,' while we are

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translates this in *De Fin.* ii. 16, 52, ' Quam illa arduos amores excitaret sui, si videretur ! ' and again in *De Off.* i. 5, ' Formam Honesti video, quae si oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores excitaret.' Probably Wesley took the quotation from the *De Officiis* passage. It is quoted in *Farther Appeal*, 22, as from ' the old heathen ' (Cicero) in the *De Officiis* form. Plato is right as far as he goes ; but it is only in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ that virtue takes visible form, and attracts universal love.

5. Wesley is thinking of Dr. Samuel Clarke's Boyle Lectures on the Attributes, published in 1705-6. He finds the ground of moral distinctions in ' the eternal reason of things ' ; which he also describes as ' an eternal fitness of things.'

Prop. xii. affirms : ' There is therefore such a thing as fitness and unfitness, eternally, necessarily and unchangeably, in the nature and reason of things.' It is a curious indication of the popularity of Dr. Clarke's work that the Deist, Matthew Tindal, in 1730, adopts his phrase ' God's commands are to be measured by the antecedent fitness of things ' ; and in Fielding's *Tom Jones*, iv. 4 (1749), Square defends young Blifil for letting Sophia's bird out by saying, ' Can any man have a higher notion of the rule of right, and the eternal fitness of things ? ' Wesley's estimate of the value of moral philosophy, and of Dr. Clarke's work in particular, had changed considerably since he wrote in Sermon XIII, ii. 3 his drastic criticism of both.

in this house of clay. While I am 'a child,' I must 'speak as a child': but I shall soon 'put away childish things'; for 'when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.'

6. But to return. The law of God (speaking after the manner of men) is a copy of the eternal mind, a transcript of the divine nature, yea, it is the fairest offspring of the everlasting Father, the brightest efflux of His essential wisdom, the visible beauty of the Most High. It is the delight and wonder of cherubim and seraphim, and all the company of heaven, and the glory and joy of every wise believer, every well-instructed child of God upon earth.

III. 1. Such is the nature of the ever-blessed law of God. I am, in the third place, to show the properties of it:—not all, for that would exceed the wisdom of an angel, but those only which are mentioned in the text. These are three: it is holy, just, and good. And, first, the law is holy.

2. In this expression the Apostle does not appear to speak of its effects, but rather of its nature: as St. James, speaking of the same thing under another name, says, 'The wisdom from above' (which is no other than this law, written in our heart) 'is first pure' (iii. 17), *ἀγνή*,—*chaste, spotless*; eternally and essentially holy. And, consequently, when it is transcribed into the life, as well as the soul, it is (as the same Apostle terms it, i. 27) *θρησκεία καθαρὰ καὶ ἀμίαντος*,—*pure religion and undefiled*, or, the pure, clean, unpolluted worship of God.

3. It is, indeed, in the highest degree, pure, chaste, clean, holy. Otherwise it could not be the immediate offspring, and much less the express resemblance, of God, who is essential

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III. 2. 'Holy' is not quite the same as St. James's 'chaste' or 'pure,' though it includes them both. The word properly applies to God alone; He is the Holy One of Israel; and then to anything consecrated to God for His service. It was the prophets who brought out

the relation between the divine holiness and the divine character, and demanded the same character from the people of God. Thus holiness comes to mean freedom from sin. But in this passage it is almost equivalent to 'The law is divine.'

holiness. It is pure from all sin, clean and unspotted from any touch of evil. It is a chaste virgin, incapable of any defilement, of any mixture with that which is unclean or unholy. It has no fellowship with sin of any kind: for 'what communion hath light with darkness?' As sin is, in its very nature, enmity to God, so His law is enmity to sin.

4. Therefore it is that the Apostle rejects with such abhorrence that blasphemous supposition, that the law of God is either sin itself, or the cause of sin. God forbid that we should suppose it is the cause of sin, because it is the discoverer of it, because it detects the hidden things of darkness, and drags them out into open day. It is true, by this means (as the Apostle observes, Rom. vii. 13), 'sin appears to be sin.' All its disguises are torn away, and it appears in its native deformity. It is true likewise, that 'sin, by the commandment, becomes exceeding sinful' being now committed against light and knowledge, being stripped even of the poor plea of ignorance, it loses its excuse, as well as disguise, and becomes far more odious both to God and man. Yea, and it is true, that 'sin worketh death by that which is good', which in itself is pure and holy. When it is dragged out to light, it rages the more when it is restrained, it bursts out with greater violence. Thus the Apostle (speaking in the person of one who was convinced of sin, but not yet delivered from it), 'Sin, taking occasion by the commandment' detecting and endeavouring to restrain it, disdained the restraint, and so much the more 'wrought in me all manner of concupiscence' (verse 8); all manner of foolish and hurtful desire, which that commandment sought to restrain. Thus, 'when the commandment came, sin revived' (verse 9), it fretted and raged the more. But this is no stain on the commandment. Though it is abused, it cannot be defiled. This only proves that 'the heart of man is desperately wicked.' But 'the law' of God 'is holy' still.

5. And it is, secondly, just. It renders to all their due.

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4. 'Appears'; i.e. is shown clearly to be. Now the word has come to mean 'seems to be, though perhaps it is not'; the older meaning is 'is seen to be, obviously is.'

It prescribes exactly what is right, precisely what ought to be done, said, or thought, both with regard to the Author of our being, with regard to ourselves, and with regard to every creature which He has made. It is adapted, in all respects, to the nature of things, of the whole universe, and every individual. It is suited to all the circumstances of each, and to all their mutual relations, whether such as have existed from the beginning, or such as commenced in any following period. It is exactly agreeable to the fitnesses of things, whether essential or accidental. It clashes with none of these in any degree; nor is ever unconnected with them. If the word be taken in that sense, there is nothing arbitrary in the law of God. Although still the whole and every part thereof is totally dependent upon His will; so that, 'Thy will be done,' is the supreme, universal law both in earth and heaven.

6. 'But is the will of God the cause of His law? Is His will the original of right and wrong? Is a thing *therefore* right, because God wills it? or does He will it because it is right?'

I fear this celebrated question is more curious than useful. And perhaps in the manner it is usually treated of, it does not so well consist with the regard that is due from a creature to the Creator and Governor of all things. It is hardly decent for man to call the supreme God to give an account to him. Nevertheless, with awe and reverence we may speak a little. The Lord pardon us if we speak amiss!

7. It seems, then, that the whole difficulty arises from considering God's will as distinct from God: otherwise it

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5. 'Essential or accidental.' The words are used in their metaphysical sense: essential is that which belongs to the nature of anything, without which it would not be what it is; accidental is that which may be found in connexion with anything, but which can be absent without affecting the real nature thereof.

6. As Wesley says, this question

is rather curious (i.e. speculatively interesting) than useful. It is just about as insoluble as the famous puzzle, 'Which came first, the hen or the egg?' Indeed one may say, 'Neither is afore or after other'; there is no law of righteousness antecedent to God; nor can God will anything that is not at the same time right.

vanishes away. For none can doubt but God is the cause of the law of God. But the will of God is God Himself. It is God considered as willing thus or thus. Consequently, to say that the will of God, or that God Himself, is the cause of the law, is one and the same thing.

8. Again: If the law, the immutable rule of right and wrong, depends upon the nature and fitnesses of things, and on their essential relations to each other (I do not say, their eternal relations, because the eternal relation of things existing in time, is little less than a contradiction), if, I say, this depends on the nature and relations of things, then it must depend on God, or the will of God, because those things themselves, with all their relations, are the works of His hands. By His will, 'for His pleasure' alone, they all 'are and were created.'

9. And yet it may be granted (which is probably all that a considerate person would contend for), that in every particular case, God wills this or this (suppose, that men should honour their parents), because it is right, agreeable to the fitness of things, to the relation wherein they stand.

10. The law, then, is right and just concerning all things. And it is good as well as just. This we may easily infer from the fountain whence it flowed. For what was this, but the goodness of God? What but goodness alone inclined Him to impart that divine copy of Himself to the holy angels? To what else can we impute His bestowing upon man the same transcript of His own nature? And what but tender love constrained Him afresh to manifest His will to fallen man—either to Adam, or any of his seed, who like him were 'come short of the glory of God'? Was it not mere love that moved Him to publish His law after the understandings of men were darkened? and to send His prophets to declare that law to the blind, thoughtless children of men? Doubtless His goodness it was which raised up Enoch and Noah to be preachers of righteousness, which caused Abraham, His friend, and Isaac, and Jacob, to bear witness to His truth. It was His goodness alone, which, when 'darkness had covered the earth, and thick darkness the people,' gave a written law to

Moses, and, through Him, to the nation whom He had chosen. It was love which explained these living oracles by David and all the prophets that followed, until, when the fullness of time was come, He sent His only-begotten Son, 'not to destroy the law, but to fulfil,' confirm every jot and tittle thereof; till, having wrote it in the hearts of all His children, and put all His enemies under His feet, 'He shall deliver up' His mediatorial 'kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.'

11. And this law, which the goodness of God gave at first, and has preserved through all ages, is, like the fountain from whence it springs, full of goodness and benignity: it is mild and kind, it is, as the Psalmist expresses it, 'sweeter than honey and the honey-comb.' It is winning and amiable. It includes 'whatsoever things are lovely or of good report. If there be any virtue, if there be any praise' before God and His holy angels, they are all comprised in this; wherein are hid all the treasures of the divine wisdom, and knowledge, and love.

12. And it is good in its effects, as well as in its nature. As the tree is, so are its fruits. The fruits of the law of God written in the heart are 'righteousness, and peace, and assurance for ever.' Or rather, the law itself is righteousness, filling the soul with a peace which passeth all understanding, and causing us to rejoice evermore, in the testimony of a good conscience toward God. It is not so properly a pledge, as 'an earnest, of our inheritance,' being a part of the purchased possession. It is God made manifest in our flesh, and bringing with Him eternal life, assuring us by that pure and perfect love, that we are 'sealed unto the day of redemption'; that He will 'spare us as a man spareth his own son that serveth him,' 'in that day when He maketh up His jewels', and that there remaineth for us 'a crown of glory which fadeth not away.'

#### IV 1. It remains only to show, in the fourth and last

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IV. 1. This was Wesley's own converts were either open sinners experience. The majority of his or persons who had hitherto been

place, the uses of the law. And the first use of it, without question, is, to convince the world of sin. This is, indeed, the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost; who can work it without any means at all, or by whatever means it pleaseth Him, however insufficient in themselves, or even improper, to produce such an effect. And, accordingly, some there are whose hearts have been broken in pieces in a moment, either in sickness or in health, without any visible cause, or any outward means whatever, and others (one in an age) have been awakened to a sense of the 'wrath of God abiding on them,' by hearing that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.' But it is the ordinary method of the Spirit of God to convict sinners by the law. It is this which, being set home on the conscience, generally breaketh the rocks in pieces. It is more especially this part of the word of God which is *ζῶν καὶ ἐνεργής*,—*quick and powerful*, full of life and energy, 'and sharper than any two-edged sword.' This, in the hand of God and of those whom He hath sent, pierces through all the folds of a deceitful heart, and 'divides asunder even the soul and the spirit'; yea, as it were, the very 'joints and marrow.' By this is the sinner discovered to himself. All his fig-leaves are torn away, and he sees that he is 'wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked.' The law flashes conviction on every side. He feels himself a mere sinner. He has nothing to pay. His 'mouth is stopped,' and he stands 'guilty before God.'

2. To slay the sinner is, then, the first use of the law; to destroy the life and strength wherein he trusts, and convince him that he is dead while he liveth; not only under the sentence of death, but actually dead unto God, void of all spiritual life, 'dead in trespasses and sins.' The second use of it is,

completely indifferent to religion. Amongst those who have been brought up in the atmosphere of a religious home, and in connexion with the Church, the influence of the love of Christ, the desire for a higher type of life, and the force of the example and persuasion of others,

are much more potent in bringing about decision for Christ than the preaching of the law. See Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, Part I, chap. iv.

'Quick and powerful'; i.e. alive and full of energy.

2. The word translated 'school-

to bring him unto life, unto Christ, that he may live. It is true, in performing both these offices, it acts the part of a severe schoolmaster. It drives us by force, rather than draws us by love. And yet love is the spring of all. It is the spirit of love which, by this painful means, tears away our confidence in the flesh, which leaves us no broken reed whereon to trust, and so constrains the sinner, stripped of all, to cry out in the bitterness of his soul, or groan in the depth of his heart,

I give up every plea beside,—  
Lord, I am damn'd ; but Thou hast died.

3. The third use of the law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God.

I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood, not only by the world, but even by many whom God hath taken out of the world, who are real children of God by faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned truth, that when we come to Christ, we have done with the law ; and that, in this sense, ' Christ is the end of the law to every

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master ' means not a teacher, but the slave who took the boy to and from school. He was usually a confidential servant, with authority to keep the boy out of mischief, and, if necessary, to punish him for offences. The function of the law is therefore disciplinary in the earlier stages of moral development ; but its ultimate purpose is to take the object of its care to the schoolmaster, even Christ, from whom he learns the lesson of salvation by faith. This rather strengthens Wesley's argument.

The lines quoted are from Charles Wesley's hymn, ' Jesus, the sinner's friend, to Thee ' ; first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739. They are the last two lines of the hymn. It appears in full in the Methodist Hymn-Book of 1876 ; but

in the present book (Hymn 307) the third verse is omitted :

Awake, the woman's conquering seed,  
Awake, and bruise the serpent's head ;  
Tread down Thy foes, with power control  
The beast and devil in my soul ;

and in the last line ' lost ' is substituted for ' damned.' This is not through any doubt as to the final doom of the lost, but because the word, ' damned ' has acquired many unscriptural connotations, and is so frequently used in profane swearing ; and the original Greek word is more correctly translated ' condemned.'

3. It is not easy to see how the law can be said ' to keep us alive.' The utmost that can be said is that the study of the law, especially as interpreted by our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount, educates the Christian conscience, and keeps

one that believeth.' 'The end of the law': so He is, 'for righteousness,' for justification, 'to every one that believeth.' Herein the law is at an end. It justifies none, but only brings them to Christ; who is also, in another respect, the end or scope of the law—the point at which it continually aims. But when it has brought us to Him, it has yet a farther office, namely, to keep us with Him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they see of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to exhort one another so much the more,—

Closer and closer let us cleave  
To His beloved embrace;  
Expect His fullness to receive,  
And grace to answer grace.

4. Allowing then, that every believer has done with the law, as it means the Jewish ceremonial law, or the entire Mosaic dispensation (for these Christ hath taken out of the way), yea, allowing we have done with the moral law, as a means of procuring our justification (for we are 'justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus'), yet, in another sense, we have not done with this law for it is still of unspeakable use, first, in convincing us of the sin that yet remains both in our hearts and lives, and thereby keeping us close to Christ, that His blood may cleanse us every moment; secondly, in deriving strength from our Head into His living members, whereby He empowers them to do what His law commands; and, thirdly, in confirming our hope of whatsoever it commands and we have not yet attained,—of receiving grace upon grace, till we are in actual possession of the fullness of His promises.

before the believer the high ideal of conduct at which he is to aim, and which it is in effect a promise that he may attain.

The lines quoted are the fourth verse of Hymn 791 in the present Hymn-Book. It first appeared, with two additional verses, in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, headed 'At

Parting.' It was written by Charles Wesley.

4. 'Deriving' is used in the old sense of transmitting, conveying. But see note on the preceding paragraph. Only indirectly can the law be said to convey strength from Christ to the believer.

5. How clearly does this agree with the experience of every true believer ! While he cries out, ' O what love have I unto Thy law ! all the day long is my study in it ' ; he sees daily, in that divine mirror, more and more of his own sinfulness. He sees more and more clearly, that he is still a sinner in all things—that neither his heart nor his ways are right before God ; and that every moment sends him to Christ. This shows him the meaning of what is written, ' Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, ' HOLINESS TO THE LORD. And it shall be upon Aaron's forehead ' (the type of our great High-Priest), ' that Aaron may bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall hallow in all their holy gifts ' (so far are our prayers or holy things from atoning for the rest of our sin), ' and it shall be always upon his forehead, that they may be accepted before the Lord ' (Exod. xxviii. 36, 38).

6. To explain this by a single instance : the law says, ' Thou shalt not kill ' , and hereby (as our Lord teaches), forbids not only outward acts, but every unkind word or thought. Now, the more I look into this perfect law, the more I feel how far I come short of it, and the more I feel this, the more I feel my need of His blood to atone for all my sin, and of His Spirit to purify my heart, and make me ' perfect and entire, lacking nothing.'

7. Therefore I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ ; seeing I now want it as much to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to Him. Otherwise, this ' evil heart of unbelief ' would immediately ' depart from the living God.' Indeed each is continually sending me to the other—the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me ' above gold

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5. ' O what love,' &c. Ps. cxix. 97, Prayer-Book version, with the substitution of ' O ' for ' Lord.'

Wesley hardly lays stress enough upon the deliverance of the believer

from the letter of the law, which he no longer obeys because it is written in the Bible, but because by the Spirit it is engraved upon his heart.

or precious stones', seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise which my Lord will fulfil in its season.

8. Who art thou then, O man, that 'judgest the law, and speakest evil of the law?'—that rankest it with sin, Satan, and death, and sendest them all to hell together? The Apostle James esteemed judging or 'speaking evil of the law' so enormous a piece of wickedness, that he knew not how to aggravate the guilt of judging our brethren more, than by showing it included this. 'So now,' says he, 'thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge!' A judge of that which God hath ordained to judge thee! So thou hast set up thyself in the judgement-seat of Christ, and cast down the rule whereby He will judge the world! O take knowledge what advantage Satan hath gained over thee; and, for the time to come, never think or speak lightly of, much less dress up as a scarecrow, this blessed instrument of the grace of God. Yea, love and value it for the sake of Him from whom it came, and of Him to whom it leads. Let it be thy glory and joy, next to the cross of Christ. Declare its praise, and make it honourable before all men.

9. And if thou art thoroughly convinced that it is the offspring of God, that it is the copy of all His inimitable perfections, and that it is 'holy, and just, and good,' but especially to them that believe; then, instead of casting it away as a polluted thing, see that thou cleave to it more and more. Never let the law of mercy and truth, of love to God and man, of lowliness, meekness, and purity, forsake thee. 'Bind it about thy neck, write it on the table of thy heart.' Keep close to the law, if thou wilt keep close to Christ; hold it fast; let it not go. Let this continually lead thee to the atoning blood, continually confirm thy hope, till all the 'righteousness of the law is fulfilled in thee,' and thou art 'filled with all the fullness of God.'

10. And if thy Lord hath already fulfilled His word, if He hath already 'written His law in thy heart,' then 'stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made thee free.' Thou art not only made free from Jewish ceremonies, from the guilt of sin, and the fear of hell (these are so far from being

the whole, that they are the least and lowest part of Christian liberty) ; but, what is infinitely more, from the power of sin, from serving the devil, from offending God. O stand fast in this liberty : in comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named ! Stand fast in loving God with all thy heart, and serving Him with all thy strength ! This is perfect freedom ; thus to keep His law, and to walk in all His commandments blameless. ' Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.' I do not mean of Jewish bondage , nor yet of bondage to the fear of hell these, I trust, are far from thee. But beware of being entangled again with the yoke of sin, of any inward or outward transgression of the law. Abhor sin far more than death or hell ; abhor sin itself, far more than the punishment of it. Beware of the bondage of pride, of desire, of anger ; of every evil temper, or word, or work. ' Look unto Jesus ' , and in order thereto, look more and more into the perfect law, ' the law of liberty ' , and ' continue therein ' , so shalt thou daily ' grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

SERMON XXX

THE LAW ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH

DISCOURSE I

SEE introduction to previous sermon.

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*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*—ROM. iii. 31.

I. ST. PAUL, having in the beginning of this Epistle laid down his general proposition, namely, that ‘the gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth’—the powerful means whereby God makes every believer a partaker of present and eternal salvation—goes on to show that there is no other way under heaven whereby men can be saved. He speaks particularly of salvation from the guilt of sin, which he commonly terms justification. And that all men stood in need of this, that none could plead their own innocence, he proves at large by various arguments, addressed to the Jews as well as the Heathens. Hence he infers (in the 19th verse of this chapter), ‘that every mouth,’ whether of Jew or Heathen, must be ‘stopped’ from excusing or justifying himself, ‘and all the world become guilty before God.’ ‘Therefore,’ saith he, by his own obedience, ‘by the

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PAR. 1. Wesley’s exegesis of this great passage is thoroughly sound; but in one or two details it needs a word of further explanation. In verse 21, ‘without the law’ means rather ‘apart from, independently of the law’; this is more than ‘without our previous obedience thereto’; the gospel is not a ‘sub-

ordinate system growing out of law, but an alternative for law, and destined ultimately to supersede it’ (Sanday and Headlam). ‘The glory of God’ is in Rabbinic language ‘a reflection from the divine glory (the Shekinah) which before the Fall brightened Adam’s face, but which he lost through the Fall.’ ‘Set

works of the law, shall no flesh be justified in His sight.' 'But now the righteousness of God without the law'—without our previous obedience thereto—'is manifested', even 'the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all that believe.' 'For there is no difference'—as to their need of justification, or the manner wherein they attain it—'for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God', the glorious image of God wherein they were created : and all (who attain) 'are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood : that He might be just, and yet the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus'—that without any impeachment to His justice, He might show him mercy for the sake of that propitiation. 'Therefore we conclude' (which was the grand position he had undertaken to establish), 'that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law' (verses 20–28).

2. It was easy to foresee an objection which might be made, and which has in fact been made in all ages, namely, that to say we are justified without the works of the law, is to abolish the law. The Apostle, without entering into a formal dispute, simply denies the charge. 'Do we then,' says he, 'make void the law through faith ? God forbid ! yea, we establish the law.'

3. The strange imagination of some, that St. Paul, when he says, 'A man is justified without the works of the law,' means only the ceremonial law, is abundantly confuted by these very words. For did St. Paul establish the ceremonial law ? It is evident he did not. He did make void that law

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forth' may mean 'proposed to Himself'; or more probably, 'publicly exhibited.' The words 'in His blood' are not connected with 'faith,' but with 'propitiation'; as the R.V. takes it, 'whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, in His blood.' 'And yet' would be better rendered 'and therefore': 'God is righteous, and *therefore*, the sacrifice of Christ having

been offered, He declares righteous the believer in Jesus.' God's justice is now on the side of the sinner; 'He is faithful and *just* to forgive us our sins.' As Charles Wesley sings:

My pardon I *claim*, For a sinner I am,  
A sinner believing in Jesus's name.

3. See previous sermon, section 2 and note.

through faith, and openly avowed his doing so. It was the moral law only, of which he might truly say, We do not make void, but establish this through faith.

4. But all men are not herein of his mind. Many there are who will not agree to this. Many in all ages of the Church, even among those who bore the name of Christians, have contended, that 'the faith once delivered to the saints' was designed to make void the whole law. They would no more spare the moral than the ceremonial law, but were for 'hewing,' as it were, both 'in pieces before the Lord', vehemently maintaining, 'If you establish any law, Christ shall profit you nothing, Christ is become of no effect to you, ye are fallen from grace.'

5. But is the zeal of these men according to knowledge? Have they observed the connexion between the law and faith? and that, considering the close connexion between them, to destroy one is indeed to destroy both—that, to abolish the moral law, is, in truth, to abolish faith and the law together? as leaving no proper means, either of bringing us to faith, or of stirring up that gift of God in our soul.

6. It therefore behoves all who desire either to come to Christ, or to walk in Him whom they have received, to take heed how they 'make void the law through faith'; to secure us effectually against which, let us inquire, first, Which are the most usual ways of making 'void the law through faith'? And, secondly, how we may follow the Apostle, and by faith 'establish the law.'

4. From the Gnostics of the second century down to Nietzsche, there have always been, both in the Church and out of it, men who have proclaimed absolute freedom from law as the ideal of human life. The word 'Antinomian' was coined by Luther to describe the teaching of Johannes Agricola (1492-1566), who, in his opposition to the Romish doctrine of salvation by works, maintained that a man is saved by faith alone without any regard to his moral character. 'Art thou,' he

says, 'steeped in sin, an adulterer or a thief? If thou believest, thou art in salvation. All who follow Moses must go to the devil. To the gallows with Moses!' Milton appears to have been the first to use the word in English, in reference to certain sectaries during the Commonwealth. But Wesley has in mind more particularly the Antinomians of his own day. See introduction to the previous sermon, and to Sermons XII and XLIX.

I. 1. Let us, first, inquire, Which are the most usual ways of making void the law through faith? Now the way for a preacher to make it all void at a stroke, is, not to preach it at all. This is just the same thing as to blot it out of the oracles of God. More especially, when it is done with design; when it is made a rule, not to preach the law and the very phrase, 'a preacher of the law,' is used as a term of reproach, as though it meant little less than an enemy to the gospel.

2. All this proceeds from the deepest ignorance of the nature, properties, and use of the law, and proves, that those who act thus, either know not Christ—are utter strangers to living faith—or, at least, that they are but babes in Christ, and, as such, 'unskilled in the word of righteousness.'

3. Their grand plea is this that preaching the gospel, that is, according to their judgement, the speaking of nothing but the sufferings and merits of Christ, answers all the ends of the law. But this we utterly deny. It does not answer the very first end of the law, namely, the convincing men of sin, the awakening those who are still asleep on the brink of hell. There may have been here and there an exempt case. One in a thousand may have been awakened by the gospel but this is no general rule: the ordinary method of God is, to convict sinners by the law, and that only. The gospel is not the means which God hath ordained, or which our Lord Himself used, for this end. We have no authority in Scripture for applying it thus, nor any ground to think it will prove effectual. Nor have we any more ground to expect this, from the nature of the thing. 'They that be whole,' as our Lord Himself observes, "need not a physician, but they that are sick.' It is absurd, therefore, to offer a physician to them that are whole, or that at least imagine themselves so to be. You are first to convince them that they are sick; otherwise they will not thank you for your labour. It is equally absurd to offer Christ to them whose heart is whole, having never yet been broken. It is, in the proper sense, 'casting pearls before swine.' Doubtless 'they will trample them under foot'; and

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I. 3. See note on iv. 1, in the *previous sermon*.

it is no more than you have reason to expect, if they also 'turn again and rend you.'

4. 'But although there is no command in Scripture to offer Christ to the careless sinner, yet are there not scriptural precedents for it?' I think not: I know not any. I believe you cannot produce one, either from the four Evangelists, or the Acts of the Apostles. Neither can you prove this to have been the practice of any of the Apostles, from any passage in all their writings.

5. 'Nay, does not the Apostle Paul say, in his former Epistle to the Corinthians, "We preach Christ crucified"? (i. 23); and in his latter, "We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord"? (iv. 5).

We consent to rest the cause on this issue; to tread in his steps, to follow his example. Only preach you just as Paul preached, and the dispute is at an end.

For although we are certain he preached Christ in as perfect a manner as the very chief of the Apostles, yet who preached the law more than St. Paul? Therefore he did not think the gospel answered the same end.

6. The very first sermon of St. Paul's which is recorded, concludes in these words: 'By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you will in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you' (Acts xiii. 39, &c.). Now, it is manifest all this is preaching the law, in the sense wherein you understand the term; even although great part of, if not all, his hearers were either Jews or religious proselytes (verse 43), and, therefore, probably many of them, in some degree at least, convinced of sin already. He first reminds them, that they could not be justified by the law of Moses, but only by faith in Christ; and then severely threatens them with the judgements of God, which is, in the strongest sense, preaching the law.

7. In his next discourse, that to the Heathens at Lystra

(xiv. 15, &c.), we do not find so much as the name of Christ : the whole purport of it is, that they should ‘ turn from those vain idols unto the living God.’ Now confess the truth. Do not you think, if you had been there, you could have preached much better than he ? I should not wonder if you thought too that his *preaching so ill* occasioned his being *so ill treated* ; and that his being *stoned* was a just judgement upon him for not *preaching Christ* !

8. To the jailor indeed, when ‘ he sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? ’ he immediately said, ‘ Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ’ (Acts xvi. 29, &c.) ; and in the case of one so deeply convinced of sin, who would not have said the same ? But to the men of Athens you find him speaking in a quite different manner ; reproving their superstition, ignorance, and idolatry ; and strongly moving them to repent, from the consideration of a future judgement, and of the resurrection from the dead (xvii. 24-31). Likewise when Felix sent for Paul, on purpose that he might ‘ hear him concerning the faith in Christ ’, instead of preaching Christ in *your* sense (which would probably have caused the Governor either to mock or to contradict and blaspheme), ‘ he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come,’ till Felix (hardened as he was) ‘ trembled ’ (xxiv. 24, 25). Go thou, and tread in his steps. Preach Christ to the careless sinner, by reasoning ‘ of righteousness, temperance, and judgement to come ’ !

9. If you say. ‘ But he preached Christ in a different manner in his Epistles ’ : I answer, (1) He did not there preach at all ; not in that sense wherein we speak : for preaching, in our present question, means speaking before a congregation. But waiving this, I answer, (2) His Epistles are directed, not to unbelievers, such as those we are now speaking of, but ‘ to the saints of God,’ in Rome, Corinth, Philippi, and other places. Now, unquestionably, he would speak more of Christ to these, than to those who were without God in the world. And yet, (3) Every one of these is full of the law, even the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians, in both

of which he does what you term 'preaching the law,' and that to believers, as well as unbelievers.

10. From hence it is plain, you know not what it is to preach Christ, in the sense of the Apostle. For doubtless St. Paul judged himself to be preaching Christ, both to Felix, and at Antioch, Lystra, and Athens: from whose example every thinking man must infer, that not only the declaring the love of Christ to sinners, but also the declaring that He will come from heaven in flaming fire, is, in the Apostle's sense, preaching Christ; yea, in the full scriptural meaning of the word. To preach Christ, is to preach what He hath revealed, either in the Old or New Testament; so that you are then as really preaching Christ, when you are saying, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God,' as when you are saying, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!'

11. Consider this well: that to preach Christ, is to preach all things that Christ hath spoken—all His promises; all His threatenings and commands, all that is written in His book, and then you will know how to preach Christ without making void the law.

12. 'But does not the greatest blessing attend those discourses wherein we peculiarly preach the merits and sufferings of Christ?'

Probably when we preach to a congregation of mourners, or of believers, these will be attended with the greatest blessing; because such discourses are peculiarly suited to their state. At least, these will usually convey the most comfort. But this is not always the greatest blessing. I may sometimes receive a far greater by a discourse that cuts me to the heart, and humbles me to the dust. Neither should I receive that comfort, if I were to preach or to hear no discourses but on the

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10. 'Hell'; more properly Hades, Sheol, the abode of the dead; this passage has no reference to 'hell' as we understand it.

12. Wesley rather underrates the effect of preaching the merits and sufferings of Christ on unbelievers.

During eighteen months of military chaplaincy in Australian camps I found that far more impression was produced upon the men by the setting forth of Christ crucified than by denunciations of their sins.

sufferings of Christ. These, by constant repetition, would lose their force, and grow more and more flat and dead, till at length they would become a dull round of words, without any spirit, or life, or virtue. So that thus to preach Christ must, in process of time, make void the gospel, as well as the law.

II. 1. A second way of making void the law through faith is, the teaching that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness. This divides itself into a thousand smaller paths, and many there are that walk therein. Indeed there are few that wholly escape it; few who are convinced, we are saved by faith, but are sooner or later, more or less, drawn aside into this by-way.

2. All those are drawn into this by-way who, if it be not their settled judgement that faith in Christ entirely sets aside the necessity of keeping His law; yet suppose, either, (1) That holiness is less necessary now than it was before Christ came; or, (2) That a less degree of it is necessary; or, (3) That it is less necessary to believers than to others. Yea, and so are all those who, although their judgement be right in the general, yet think they may take more liberty in particular cases than they could have done before they believed. Indeed, the using the term liberty, in such a manner, for liberty from obedience or holiness, shows at once that their judgement is perverted, and that they are guilty of what they imagined to be far from them, namely, of making void the law through faith, by supposing faith to supersede holiness.

3. The first plea of those who teach this expressly is, that we are now under the covenant of grace, not works; and therefore we are no longer under the necessity of performing the works of the law.

And who ever was under the covenant of works? None but Adam before the fall. He was fully and properly under that covenant, which required perfect, universal obedience, as the one condition of acceptance, and left no place for pardon, upon the very least transgression. But no man else was ever under this, neither Jew nor Gentile, neither before Christ nor

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II. 3. As we have already pointed out, the Covenant of Works with Adam is a pure fiction. See note on Sermon VI, 1.

since. All his sons were and are under the covenant of grace. The manner of their acceptance is this: the free grace of God, through the merits of Christ, gives pardon to them that believe, that believe with such a faith as, working by love, produces all obedience and holiness.

4. The case is not, therefore, as you suppose, that men were *once* more obliged to obey God, or to work the works of His law, than they are *now*. This is a supposition you cannot make good. But we should have been obliged, if we had been under the covenant of works, to have done those works antecedent to our acceptance. Whereas now all good works, though as necessary as ever, are not antecedent to our acceptance, but consequent upon it. Therefore the nature of the covenant of grace gives you no ground, no encouragement at all, to set aside any instance or degree of obedience, any part or measure of holiness.

5. 'But are we not justified by faith, without the works of the law?' Undoubtedly we are; without the works either of the ceremonial or the moral law. And would to God all men were convinced of this! It would prevent innumerable evils, Antinomianism in particular: for, generally speaking, they are the Pharisees who make the Antinomians. Running into an extreme so palpably contrary to Scripture, they occasion others to run into the opposite one. These, seeking to be justified by works, affright those from allowing any place for them.

6. But the truth lies between both. We are, doubtless, justified by faith. This is the corner-stone of the whole Christian building. We are justified without the works of the law, as any previous condition of justification, but they are an immediate fruit of that faith whereby we are justified. So that if good works do not follow our faith, even all inward and outward holiness, it is plain our faith is nothing worth, we are yet in our sins. Therefore, that we

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5. 'They are the Pharisees who make the Antinomians.' As we have seen, Agricola was led into Antinomianism by the Romish doctrine

of salvation by works; and even Luther was touched by the infection when he declared the Epistle of James to be 'an epistle of straw.'

are justified by faith, even by faith without works, is no ground for making void the law through faith, or for imagining that faith is a dispensation from any kind or degree of holiness.

7. ' Nay, but does not St. Paul expressly say, " Unto him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness " ? And does it not follow from hence, that faith is to a believer in the room, in the place, of righteousness ? But if faith is in the room of righteousness or holiness, what need is there of this too ? '

This, it must be acknowledged, comes home to the point, and is, indeed, the main pillar of Antinomianism. And yet it needs not a long or laboured answer. We allow, (1) That God justifies the ungodly, him that, till that hour, is totally ungodly—full of all evil, void of all good : (2) That He justifies the ungodly that worketh not, that, till that moment, worketh no good work—neither can he, for an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit : (3) That He justifies him by faith alone, without any goodness or righteousness preceding : and, (4) That faith is then counted to him for righteousness, namely, for preceding righteousness ; that is, God, through the merits of Christ, accepts him that believes, as if he had already fulfilled all righteousness. But what is all this to your point ?

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7 (2). Wesley was led to modify this view later ; in *Minutes*, 1770, he says, ' We have received it as a maxim that " a man is to do nothing in order to justification." ' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should " cease to do evil and learn to do well." ' Whoever repents should do " works meet for repentance." ' And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for ? ' (See above, i. 450 n.)

On this whole question see Dr. W. B. Pope, *Theology*, iii. 173 : ' The Antinomian proper is one who treats the requirement of perfect holiness

as met by Christ, and refuses to measure his conduct by any law whatever. . The law is no longer a condition of salvation ; obedience not being a condition of acceptance as to the past, or negative salvation, neither is it a condition of acceptance as to the future, or positive salvation. There is a still more prevalent practical Antinomianism, which uses liberty as an occasion to the flesh.

This is found in all communities ; the disgrace of all creeds and confessions. . As the gospel disarms the law in one sense, it arms it again in another ; they are a mutual defence.'

The Apostle does not say, either here or elsewhere, that this faith is counted to him for subsequent righteousness. He does teach that there is no righteousness before faith, but where does he teach that there is none after it? He does assert, holiness cannot *precede* justification, but not, that it need not *follow* it. St. Paul, therefore, gives you no colour for making void the law, by teaching that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness.

III. 1. There is yet another way of making void the law through faith, which is more common than either of the former and that is, the doing it practically, the making it void in *fact*, though not in *principle*, the *living* as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness.

How earnestly does the Apostle guard us against this, in those well-known words: 'What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid' (Rom. vi. 15): a caution which it is needful thoroughly to consider, because it is of the last importance.

2. The being 'under the law,' may here mean, (1) The being obliged to observe the ceremonial law (2) The being obliged to conform to the whole Mosaic institution (3) The being obliged to keep the whole moral law, as the condition of our acceptance with God: and, (4) The being under the wrath and curse of God, under sentence of eternal death; under a sense of guilt and condemnation, full of horror and slavish fear.

3. Now although a believer is 'not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,' yet from the moment he believes, he is not 'under the law,' in any of the preceding senses. On the contrary, he is 'under grace,' under a more benign, gracious dispensation. As he is no longer under the ceremonial law, nor under the Mosaic institution, as he is not obliged to keep even the moral law, as the condition of his acceptance; so he is delivered from the wrath and the curse of God, from all sense of guilt and condemnation, and from all that horror and fear of death and hell whereby he was all his life before subject to bondage. And he now performs

(which while 'under the law' he could not do) a willing and universal obedience. He obeys not from the motive of slavish fear, but on a nobler principle; namely, the grace of God ruling in his heart, and causing all his works to be wrought in love.

4. What then? Shall this evangelical principle of action be less powerful than the legal? Shall we be less obedient to God from filial love than we were from servile fear?

It is well if this is not a common case; if this practical Antinomianism, this unobserved way of making void the law through faith, has not infected thousands of believers.

Has it not infected you? Examine yourself honestly and closely. Do you not do now what you durst not have done when you was 'under the law,' or (as we commonly call it) under conviction? For instance: you durst not then indulge yourself in food: you took just what was needful, and that of the cheapest kind. Do you not allow yourself more latitude now? Do you not indulge yourself a *little* more than you did? O beware lest you 'sin because you are not under the law, but under grace.'

5. When you was under conviction, you durst not indulge the lust of the eye in any degree. You would not do anything, great or small, merely to gratify your curiosity. You regarded only cleanliness and necessity, or at most very moderate convenience, either in furniture or apparel, superfluity and finery of whatever kind, as well as fashionable elegance, were both a terror and an abomination to you.

Are they so still? Is your conscience as tender now in these things as it was then? Do you still follow the same rule both in furniture and apparel, trampling all finery, all superfluity, everything useless, everything merely ornamental, however fashionable, under foot? Rather, have you not resumed what you had once laid aside, and what you could not then use without wounding your conscience? And have you

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III. 3. The last sentence is most important; the believer is no longer 'under the law,' because his motive for obeying it is not that it is written in the tables of stone, but because he finds it written on his heart by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Wesley does not give this aspect of the truth the prominence it deserves.

not learned to say, 'O, I am not so scrupulous now'? I would to God you were! Then you would not *sin* thus, 'because you are not under the law, but under grace!'

6. You was once scrupulous too of commending any to their face; and still more, of suffering any to commend you. It was a stab to your heart; you could not bear it; you sought the honour that cometh of God only. You could not endure such conversation; nor any conversation which was not good to the use of edifying. All idle talk, all trifling discourse, you abhorred, you hated as well as feared it, being deeply sensible of the value of time, of every precious, fleeting moment. In like manner, you dreaded and abhorred idle expense; valuing your money only less than your time, and trembling lest you should be found an unfaithful steward, even of the mammon of unrighteousness.

Do you now look upon praise as deadly poison, which you can neither give nor receive but at the peril of your soul? Do you still dread and abhor all conversation which does not tend to the use of edifying, and labour to improve every moment, that it may not pass without leaving you better than it found you? Are not you less careful as to the expense both of money and time? Cannot you now lay out either, as you could not have done once? Alas! how has that 'which should have been for your health, proved to you an occasion of falling'? How have you 'sinned because you was not under the law, but under grace'!

7 God forbid you should any longer continue thus to 'turn the grace of God into lasciviousness'! O remember how clear and strong a conviction you once had concerning all these things! And, at the same time, you was fully satisfied

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6 'Do you now look upon praise as deadly poison?' If by praise is meant flattery, this is so; but sincere commendation is so far from being a poison that it is often a stimulus to improvement. Our Lord commended the scribe, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God'; St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'I

praise you that ye remember me in all things.' Wesley himself, especially as he grew older, was very ready to commend those who did well; writing in 1771 to a young lady he says, 'Equally natural and equally innocent is the joy which we receive from being approved by those we love.'

from whom that conviction came. The world told you, you was in a delusion, but you knew it was the voice of God. In these things you was not too scrupulous then; but you are not now scrupulous enough. God kept you longer in that painful school, that you might learn those great lessons the more perfectly. And have you forgot them already? O recollect them before it is too late! Have you suffered so many things in vain? I trust it is not yet in vain. Now use the conviction without the pain! Practise the lesson without the rod! Let not the mercy of God weigh less with you now, than His fiery indignation did before. Is love a less powerful motive than fear? If not, let it be an invariable rule, 'I will do nothing now I am "under grace," which I durst not have done when "under the law."' '

8. I cannot conclude this head without exhorting you to examine yourself, likewise, touching sins of omission. Are you as clear of these, now you 'are under grace,' as you was when 'under the law'? How diligent was you then in hearing the Word of God! Did you neglect any opportunity? Did you not attend thereon day and night? Would a small hindrance have kept you away? a little business? a visitant? a slight indisposition? a soft bed? a dark or cold morning? Did not you then fast often; or use abstinence to the uttermost of your power? Was not you much in prayer (cold and heavy as you was), while you was hanging over the mouth of hell? Did you not speak and not spare even for an unknown God? Did you not boldly plead His cause, reprove sinners, and avow the truth before an adulterous generation? And are you now a believer in Christ? Have you the faith that overcometh the world? What! and are you less zealous for your Master now, than you was when you knew Him not? less diligent in fasting, in prayer, in hearing His word, in calling sinners to God? O repent! See and feel your grievous loss! Remember from whence you are fallen! Bewail your unfaithfulness! Now be zealous and do the first works; lest, if you continue to 'make void the law through faith,' God cut you off, and appoint you your portion with the unbelievers.

SERMON XXXI  
THE LAW ESTABLISHED THROUGH FAITH  
DISCOURSE II

SEE introduction to Sermon XXIX.

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*Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*—ROM. iii. 31.

I. IT has been shown in the preceding discourse, which are the most usual ways of making void the law through faith; namely, first, the not preaching it at all; which effectually makes it all void at a stroke; and this under colour of preaching Christ and magnifying the gospel, though it be, in truth, destroying both the one and the other;—secondly, the teaching (whether directly or indirectly), that faith supersedes the necessity of holiness; that this is less necessary now, or a less degree of it necessary, than before Christ came; that it is less necessary to us, because we believe, than otherwise it would have been, or, that Christian liberty is a liberty from any kind or degree of holiness (so perverting those great truths, that we are now under the covenant of grace, and not of works, that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law; and that ‘to him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness’),—or, thirdly, the doing this practically; the making void the law in practice, though not in principle; the living or acting as if faith was designed to excuse us from holiness; the allowing ourselves in sin, ‘because we are not under the law, but under grace.’ It remains to inquire how we may follow a better pattern, how we may be able to say, with the Apostle, ‘Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.’

2. We do not, indeed, establish the old ceremonial law : we know that is abolished for ever. Much less do we establish the whole Mosaic dispensation : this we know our Lord has nailed to His cross. Nor yet do we so establish the moral law (which it is to be feared too many do), as if the fulfilling it, the keeping all the commandments, were the condition of our justification : if it were so, surely 'in His sight should no man living be justified.' But all this being allowed, we still, in the Apostle's sense, 'establish the law,' the moral law.

I. 1. We establish the law, first by our doctrine, by endeavouring to preach it in its whole extent, to explain and enforce every part of it, in the same manner as our great Teacher did while upon earth. We establish it by following St. Peter's advice : 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God' ; as the holy men of old, moved by the Holy Ghost, spoke and wrote for our instruction ; and as the Apostles of our blessed Lord, by the direction of the same Spirit. We establish it whenever we speak in His name, by keeping back nothing from them that hear ; by declaring to them, without any limitation or reserve, the whole counsel of God. And in order the more effectually to establish it, we use herein great plainness of speech. 'We are not as many that *corrupt* the word of God' καπηλεύοντες (as artful men their bad wine) ; we do not *cauponize*, *mix*, *adulterate*, or *soften* it, to make it suit the taste of the hearers : 'but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God, speak we in Christ' ; as having no other aim, than 'by manifestation of the truth to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'

I. par. 1. The meaning of the Greek word in 2 Cor. ii. 17 is not to corrupt or adulterate, but to peddle round like a huckster for profit. It is true that in the LXX version of Isa. i. 22 it is said, 'Your hucksters mingle your wine with water' ; but that is only one of the many tricks of trade in which these pedlars indulged. St. Paul means that he

is not going round like a sort of commercial traveller, to dispose of his spiritual wares at as high a profit as he can get, and using all the tricks of trade in order to increase his gains. The unusual word 'cauponize' means to carry on a small retail trade ; with the connotation of dishonesty.

2. We then, by our doctrine, establish the law, when we thus openly declare it to all men ; and that in the fullness wherein it is delivered by our blessed Lord and His Apostles ; when we publish it in the height, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof. We then establish the law, when we declare every part of it, every commandment contained therein, not only in its full, literal sense, but likewise in its spiritual meaning ; not only with regard to the outward actions, which it either forbids or enjoins, but also with respect to the inward principle, to the thoughts, desires, and intents of the heart.

3. And indeed this we do the more diligently, not only because it is of the deepest importance,—inasmuch as all the fruit, every word and work, must be only evil continually, if the tree be evil, if the dispositions and tempers of the heart be not right before God,—but likewise, because as important as these things are, they are little considered or understood—so little, that we may truly say of the law too, when taken in its full spiritual meaning, it is ‘ a mystery which was hid from ages and generations since the world began.’ It was utterly hid from the heathen world. They, with all their boasted wisdom, neither found out God, nor the law of God, not in the letter, much less in the spirit of it. ‘ Their foolish hearts were ’ more and more ‘ darkened ’ ; while ‘ professing themselves wise, they became fools.’ And it was almost equally hid, as to its spiritual meaning, from the bulk of the Jewish nation. Even these, who were so ready to declare concerning others, ‘ This people that knoweth not the law are cursed,’ pronounced their own sentence therein, as being under the same curse, the same dreadful ignorance. Witness our Lord’s continual reproof of the wisest among them, for their gross

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3. ‘ A mystery ’ ; i.e. a secret only known to the initiated ; applied by St. Paul to the truths of the gospel, but, as Wesley shows, not inapplicable to the law also.

‘ One of their most eminent Rabbis ’ : Rabbi David Kimchi, one of the greatest of the mediaeval Jewish commentators. He was born

at Narbonne in 1155, of parents who had been driven out of Spain by the Moors, and died there about 1235. He wrote a Commentary on the Psalms. He is known as ReDaK, i.e. Rabbi David Kimchi. He was the greatest Jewish grammarian and lexicographer for 650 years.

misinterpretations of it. Witness the supposition almost universally received among them, that they needed only to make clean the outside of the cup, that the paying tithe of mint, anise, and cummin—outward exactness—would atone for inward unholiness, for the total neglect both of justice and mercy, of faith and the love of God. Yea, so absolutely was the spiritual meaning of the law hidden from the wisest of them, that one of their most eminent Rabbis comments thus on those words of the Psalmist, ‘ If I incline unto iniquity with my heart, the Lord will not hear me ’ : ‘ That is,’ saith he, ‘ if it be only in my heart, if I do not commit outward wickedness, the Lord will not regard it, He will not punish me, unless I proceed to the outward act ’ !

4. But, alas ! the law of God, as to its inward, spiritual meaning, is not hid from the Jews or Heathens only, but even from what is called the Christian world ; at least, from a vast majority of them. The spiritual sense of the commandments of God is still a mystery to these also. Nor is this observable only in those lands which are overspread with Romish darkness and ignorance : but this is too sure, that the far greater part even of those who are called *Reformed Christians* are utter strangers at this day to the law of Christ, in the purity and spirituality of it.

5. Hence it is that to this day ‘ the Scribes and Pharisees,’ the men who have the form but not the power of religion, and who are generally wise in their own eyes, and righteous in their own conceits,—‘ hearing these things, are offended ’, are deeply offended, when we speak of the religion of the heart, and particularly when we show, that, without this, were we to ‘ give all our goods to feed the poor,’ it would profit us nothing. But offended they must be ; for we cannot but speak the truth as it is in Jesus. It is our part, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, to deliver our own soul. All that is written in the book of God we are to declare, not as pleasing men, but the Lord. We are to

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5. In this translation of 2 Tim. iii. 16, Wesley adopts the punctua-

tion accepted by most of modern commentators, and in the R.V.

declare, not only all the promises, but all the threatenings too, which we find therein. At the same time that we proclaim all the blessings and privileges which God hath prepared for His children, we are likewise to 'teach all the things whatsoever He hath commanded.' And we know that all these have their use; either for the awakening those that sleep, the instructing the ignorant, the comforting the feeble-minded, or the building up and perfecting of the saints. We know that 'all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is profitable,' either 'for doctrine,' or 'for reproof'; either 'for correction, or for instruction in righteousness'; and that 'the man of God,' in the process of the work of God in his soul, has need of every part thereof, that he may at length 'be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.'

6. It is our part thus to preach Christ, by preaching all things whatsoever He hath revealed. We may indeed, without blame, yea, and with a peculiar blessing from God, declare the love of our Lord Jesus Christ; we may speak, in a more especial manner, of the 'Lord our Righteousness'; we may expatiate upon the grace of God in Christ, 'reconciling the world unto Himself', we may, at proper opportunities, dwell upon His praise, as 'bearing the iniquities of us all, as wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, that by His stripes we might be healed': but still we should not preach Christ according to His word, if we were wholly to confine ourselves to this; we are not ourselves clear before God, unless we proclaim Him in all His offices. To preach Christ, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, is to preach Him, not only as our great High-Priest, 'taken from among men, and ordained for men, in things pertaining to God'—as such 'reconciling us to God by His blood,' and 'ever living to make intercession for us',—but likewise as the Prophet of the Lord, 'who of God is made unto us wisdom'; who, by His Word and His Spirit, is with us always, 'guiding us into all truth';—yea, and as remaining a King for ever, as giving laws to all whom He has bought with His blood; as restoring those to the image of God, whom He had first reinstated in His favour; as reigning in all believing hearts

until He has 'subdued all things to Himself,'—until He hath utterly cast out all sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

II. 1. We establish the law, secondly, when we so preach faith in Christ as not to supersede, but produce, holiness, to produce all manner of holiness, negative and positive, of the heart and of the life.

In order to this, we continually declare (what should be frequently and deeply considered by all who would not 'make void the law through faith'), that faith itself, even Christian faith, the faith of God's elect, the faith of the operation of God, still is only the handmaid of love. As glorious and honourable as it is, it is not the end of the commandment. God hath given this honour to love alone love is the end of all the commandments of God. Love is the end, the sole end, of every dispensation of God, from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And it will endure when heaven and earth flee away, for 'love' alone 'never faileth.' Faith will totally fail, it will be swallowed up in sight, in the everlasting vision of God. But even then, love,—

Its nature and its office still the same,  
Lasting its lamp, and unconsumed its flame,  
In deathless triumph shall for ever live,  
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise receive.

II. 1. The idea that there will be no place for faith or hope in the future life is flatly contradicted by St. Paul: 'Now *abideth* faith, hope, love, these three.' The notion that faith and hope will cease in heaven is due to Chrysostom; but most recent commentators are against him. Thus Ellicott says on this passage, 'The "*abideth*" thus stretches onward into the world beyond the present, and conveys the deep thought that faith, hope (it may be, in some necessarily changed aspects), and love will endure for evermore.' Faith as a purely intellectual attitude may

perhaps be unnecessary when we see God face to face; but as an emotional trust in God, it must still continue. It is true that Charles Wesley in the great hymn (842 in the present Hymn-Book) sings of heaven as the land above,

Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,  
And hope in full supreme delight,  
And everlasting love;

but, on the other hand, John Wesley in Hymn 370, says:

When from the dust of death I rise  
To claim my mansion in the skies,  
Even then, this shall be all my plea,  
Jesus hath lived, hath died for me!

which certainly implies the con-

2. Very excellent things are spoken of faith ; and whosoever is a partaker thereof may well say with the Apostle, 'Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.' Yet still it loses all its excellence when brought into a comparison with love. What St. Paul observes concerning the superior glory of the gospel, above that of the law, may, with great propriety, be spoken of the superior glory of love, above that of faith : 'Even that which was made glorious hath no glory, in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away is glorious, much more doth that which remaineth exceed in glory.' Yea, all the glory of faith, before it is done away, arises hence, that it ministers to love : it is the great temporary means which God has ordained to promote that eternal end.

3. Let those who magnify faith beyond all proportion, so as to swallow up all things else, and who so totally misapprehend the nature of it as to imagine it stands in the place of love, consider farther, that as love will exist after faith, so it did exist long before it. The angels who, from the moment of their creation, beheld the face of their Father that is in heaven, had no occasion for faith, in its general notion, as it is the evidence of things not seen. Neither had they need of faith, in its more particular acceptation, faith in the blood of Jesus : for He took not upon Him the nature of angels ; but only the seed of Abraham. There was, therefore, no place before the foundation of the world for faith, either in the general or particular sense. But there was for love. Love existed from eternity, in God, the great ocean of love. Love had a place in all the children of God, from the moment of their creation : they received at once, from their gracious Creator, to exist and to love.

tinuance of saving faith in Christ. In any case, however, 'the greatest of these is love,' and the argument is unaffected.

The lines quoted are from Matthew Prior's 'Charity,' but rearranged by Wesley. Lines 57, 58 come first ; then lines 35, 36. The original runs :

57. Thy office and thy nature still the same,  
Lasting thy lamp, and unconsum'd thy  
flame.

35. In happy triumph shall for ever live,  
And endless good diffuse, and endless praise  
receive.

The same lines are more exactly quoted in Sermon XVII, 17.

3. The idea that the angels have no occasion for faith is by no means obviously true.

4. Nor is it certain (as ingeniously and plausibly as many have descanted upon this), that faith, even in the general sense of the word, had any place in paradise. It is highly probable, from that short and uncircumstantial account which we have in holy writ, that Adam, before he rebelled against God, walked with Him by sight, and not by faith.

For then his reason's eye was strong and clear,  
And (as an eagle can behold the sun)  
Might have beheld his Maker's face as near  
As th' intellectual angels could have done.

He was then able to talk with Him face to face, whose face we cannot now see and live ; and consequently had no need of that faith, whose office it is to supply the want of sight.

5. On the other hand, it is absolutely certain, faith, in its particular sense, had then no place. For in that sense, it necessarily pre-supposes sin, and the wrath of God declared against the sinner ; without which there is no need of an atonement for sin, in order to the sinner's reconciliation with God. Consequently, as there was no need of an atonement before the fall, so there was no place for faith in that atonement, man being then pure from every stain of sin ; holy as God is holy. But love even then filled his heart, it reigned in him without a rival, and it was only when love was lost by sin, that faith was added, not for its own sake, nor with any design that it should exist any longer than until it had answered the end for which it was ordained,—namely, to restore man to the love from which he was fallen. At the fall, therefore, was added this evidence of things unseen, which before was utterly needless ; this confidence in redeeming love, which could not possibly have any place till the promise

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4. Equally precarious and even more fanciful is the denial of the existence of faith in unfallen man ; though before the Fall he did not need salvation, and therefore could not exercise saving faith. But all this speculation is mere cobweb-spinning. The verse is inaccurately quoted from Sir John Davies's *Nosce*

*Teipsum* (1599), stanza iii. It runs in the original :

And when their Reason's eye was sharp and clear,  
And, as an eagle can behold the sun,  
Could have approached the Eternal Light as near  
As th' intellectual angels could have done.

Line 3 was corrected in Jackson's 1825 edition of the Sermons.

was made, that 'the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head.'

6. Faith, then, was originally designed of God to re-establish the law of love. Therefore, in speaking thus, we are not undervaluing it, or robbing it of its due praise; but, on the contrary, showing its real worth, exalting it in its just proportion, and giving it that very place which the wisdom of God assigned it from the beginning. It is the grand means of restoring that holy love wherein man was originally created. It follows, that although faith is of no value in itself (as neither is any other means whatsoever), yet as it leads to that end, the establishing anew the law of love in our hearts; and as, in the present state of things, it is the only means under heaven for effecting it, it is on that account an unspeakable blessing to man, and of unspeakable value before God.

III. 1. And this naturally brings us to observe, thirdly, the most important way of establishing the law, namely, the establishing it in our own hearts and lives. Indeed, without this, what would all the rest avail? We might establish it by our doctrine, we might preach it in its whole extent, might explain and enforce every part of it, we might open it in its most spiritual meaning, and declare the mysteries of the kingdom, we might preach Christ in all His offices, and faith in Christ as opening all the treasures of His love, and yet all this time, if the law we preached were not established in our hearts, we should be of no more account before God, than 'sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals'; all our preaching would be so far from profiting ourselves, that it would only increase our damnation.

2. This is, therefore, the main point to be considered,—How may we establish the law in our own hearts, so that it may have its full influence on our lives? And this can only be done by faith.

Faith alone it is which effectually answers this end, as we learn from daily experience. For so long as we walk by faith, not by sight, we go swiftly on in the way of holiness.

While we steadily look, not at the things which are seen, but at those which are not seen, we are more and more crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us. Let but the eye of the soul be constantly fixed, not on the things which are temporal, but on those which are eternal, and our affections are more and more loosened from earth, and fixed on things above. So that faith, in general, is the most direct and effectual means of promoting all righteousness and true holiness ; of establishing the holy and spiritual law in the hearts of them that believe.

3. And by faith, taken in its more particular meaning, for a confidence in a pardoning God, we establish His law in our own hearts, in a still more effectual manner. For there is no motive which so powerfully inclines us to love God, as the sense of the love of God in Christ. Nothing enables us like a piercing conviction of this to give our hearts to Him who was given for us. And from this principle of grateful love to God arises love to our brother also. Neither can we avoid loving our neighbour, if we truly believe the love wherewith God hath loved us. Now this love to man, grounded on faith, and love to God, 'worketh no ill to' our 'neighbour', consequently, it is, as the Apostle observes, 'the fulfilling of the' whole negative 'law.' 'For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery : Thou shalt not kill : Thou shalt not steal Thou shalt not bear false witness Thou shalt not covet and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.' Neither is love content with barely working no evil to our neighbour. It continually incites us to do good, as we have time and opportunity, to do good, in every possible kind, and in every possible degree, to all men. It is, therefore, the fulfilling of the positive, likewise, as well as of the negative, law of God.

4. Nor does faith fulfil either the negative or positive law as to the external part only ; but it works inwardly by love, to the purifying of the heart, the cleansing of it from all vile affections. Every one that hath this faith in himself 'purifieth

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III. 4. The passage from 1 John on Him purifieth himself, even as  
iii. 3 is misquoted ; it should be He is pure.'  
'Every one that hath this hope set

himself even as He is pure,'—purifieth himself from every earthly, sensual desire, from all vile and inordinate affections; yea, from the whole of that carnal mind which is enmity against God. At the same time, if it have its perfect work, it fills him with all goodness, righteousness, and truth. It brings all heaven into his soul, and causes him to walk in the light, even as God is in the light.

5. Let us thus endeavour to establish the law in ourselves; not sinning 'because we are under grace,' but rather using all the power we receive thereby, 'to fulfil all righteousness.' Calling to mind what light we received from God while His Spirit was convincing us of sin, let us beware we do not put out that light, what we had then attained let us hold fast. Let nothing induce us to build again what we have destroyed, to resume anything, small or great, which we then clearly saw was not for the glory of God, or the profit of our own soul; or to neglect anything, small or great, which we could not then neglect, without a check from our own conscience. To increase and perfect the light which we had before, let us now add the light of faith. Confirm we the former gift of God, by a deeper sense of whatever He had then shown us, by a greater tenderness of conscience, and a more exquisite sensibility of sin. Walking now with joy, and not with fear, in a clear, steady sight of things eternal, we shall look on pleasure, wealth, praise, all the things of earth, as on bubbles upon the water; counting nothing important, nothing desirable, nothing worth a deliberate thought, but only what is 'within the veil,' where Jesus 'sitteth at the right hand of God.'

6. Can *you* say, 'Thou art merciful to my unrighteousness, my sins Thou rememberest no more'? Then, for the time to come, see that you fly from sin, as from the face of a serpent! For how exceeding sinful does it appear to you now! How heinous above all expression! On the other hand, in how amiable a light do you now see the holy and perfect will of God! Now, therefore, labour that it may be fulfilled, both in you, by you, and upon you! Now watch and pray, that you may sin no more, that you may see and shun the least transgression of His law! You see the motes

which you could not see before, when the sun shines into a dark place. In like manner, you see the sins which you could not see before, now the Sun of Righteousness shines in your heart. Now then do all diligence to walk, in every respect, according to the light you have received ! Now be zealous to receive more light daily, more of the knowledge and love of God, more of the Spirit of Christ, more of His life, and of the power of His resurrection ! Now use all the knowledge, and love, and life, and power you have already attained , so shall you continually go on from faith to faith , so shall you daily increase in holy love, till faith is swallowed up in sight, and the law of love is established to all eternity !

## SERMON XXXII

### THE NATURE OF ENTHUSIASM

THIS sermon was first published in Vol. III of the Sermons in 1750, and at least three editions in separate form were published during Wesley's lifetime. The whole chapter was the subject of a series of expositions at the Foundery in December 1740, and at Bristol (or Kingswood ?) the previous May. This verse is set down as the text at the Chapel (West Street) on Christmas Day 1752, and at London (presumably the Foundery) the next day. In its present form it was probably one of those prepared for publication in November and December 1749. See introduction to Sermon XXIX. Its purpose was to answer the charge of 'Enthusiasm' which had been constantly made against Wesley and the Methodists since 1739. On October 14, 1739, the Rev. Charles Wheatley, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, described the Methodists as 'rapturous enthusiasts, preaching up unaccountable sensations, violent emotions, and sudden changes; boasting of immediate inspirations, and laying a blasphemous claim to greater miracles than ever were wrought even by Christ Himself.' The same year Dr. Joseph Trapp preached four sermons in different London churches against 'the doctrines and practices of certain modern enthusiasts,' and published them. The Rev. Josiah Tucker accused Whitefield of 'blasphemous and enthusiastic notions'; and Bishop Gibson, in his Pastoral Charge of August 1, arraigns the Methodists as enthusiasts on nine counts, to wit: their claim to extraordinary communications from God; to a special mission; to divine inspiration; to divine power in their preaching; to the gift of the Holy Ghost; to prophecy; to be the equals of the apostles and even of Christ; to be the preachers of a new gospel; and to use extraordinary methods of teaching. Pamphlet followed pamphlet, some more scurrilous and abusive than others, but all concurring in the charge of Enthusiasm. The *Scots Magazine* and the *Weekly Miscellany* were prominent in the baiting of the 'crack-brained enthusiasts.'

Passing over a host of minor assailants, we come in 1744 to the Rev. Thomas Church's *Remarks on Mr. Wesley's Last Journal*, a calm and reasonable criticism; he was, as Wesley himself said in 1777, 'a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian; and as such he both spoke and wrote'; and he answered him in the same spirit. Church's

definition of Enthusiasm is worth quoting: 'Enthusiasm is a false persuasion of an extraordinary divine assistance, which leads men on to such conduct as is only to be justified by the supposition of such assistance. An enthusiast is then sincere, but mistaken. His intentions are good, but his actions most abominable.' He proceeds to detail the marks of Enthusiasm, namely, the following one's own warm imagination rather than the Word of God; the resting on ecstasies; hence liability to error; superiority to reason and argument; treating his opponents as men who are fighting against God; trusting in dreams; talking like an inspired person and applying Scripture phrases to oneself without regard to their original meaning. Wesley says, 'You have drawn, sir (in the main) a true picture of an enthusiast. But it is no more like me than I am like a centaur'; and he proceeds to answer the points in order. Church concludes with two 'grand instances' of Wesley's enthusiasm: (1) his having recourse to casting lots or opening the Bible at random, as recorded some eight times in his *Journal*; which Wesley justifies by saying that he never did this until after full consideration it seemed impossible to decide the question; he then left the decision, not, as Church said, 'to chance,' but to the Lord in whose hand is 'the whole disposal thereof.' (2) His record in the *Journal* of several cases of the cure of sick persons through prayer; and of other remarkable providential interpositions. Wesley's answer is, 'I do not know that God hath anyway precluded Himself from thus exerting His sovereign power, from working miracles in any kind or degree, in any age, to the end of the world.' Wesley's two answers to Church were published in 1745 and 1746.

Finally came Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, a feeble and abusive attack, which Wesley answered in 1750 and 1751 in two 'Letters to the Author.' This sermon is thus part of a controversy which had been going on for over ten years. With great skill Wesley not only answers the charges against himself, but carries the war into the enemies' camp by affirming that they are the real enthusiasts, because they imagine themselves to be Christians when they are not; they are thus 'mere madmen, mere enthusiasts all!'

This reiterated charge of Enthusiasm was ultimately based upon the teaching of Wesley in regard to the direct witness of the Spirit, and the consequent possibility of personal fellowship with God. The doctrine was no doubt open to abuse, and the extravagant pretensions to which it led in the case of many uneducated men, who laid claim to divine inspiration for all that they said or did, gave some colour to the objections and criticisms of its opponents. See introduction to Sermon X.

As to the word itself, it is, in spite of Wesley's opinion in paragraph 6,

derived from the participial form of a supposititious verb ἐνθεῖσθαι, from ἐν and θεός, meaning to be possessed or inspired by the Deity. The suggestion that it has something to do with ἐν θυσίᾳ, in sacrifice, is quite impossible. The adjective ἔνθεος, inspired, occurs in the Greek tragedians; but it was Plato who made the word 'enthusiasm' current coin. By it he meant a direct intuition of the divine through the indwelling of God in the soul; and he distinguished four types of enthusiast—the Seer or Prophet, the Mystic or Saint, the Poet, and the Philosopher. It first appeared in English at the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was originally used in the Platonic sense; we find it employed to describe the divine influence on the priestess at Delphi, the Sibyls, and the Bacchanals; and the divine 'frenzy' of the poet and the musician. But through the decline of spiritual religion after the Restoration, and the almost universal triumph of materialism and cold correctness in the early eighteenth century, it was inevitable that any one who claimed any sort of spiritual communion with God should be looked upon as an impostor or a madman; and so the word became degraded to mean a fancied or fraudulent inspiration. Thus Shaftesbury in *Charac.* section 7 (1711) says: 'Inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, and Enthusiasm is a false one.' Locke says: 'Enthusiasm is founded neither on reason nor divine revelation, but rises from the conceits of a warmed or over-weening brain.' It is in this sense exclusively that both Wesley and his opponents use the word. With the spiritual revival, of which Wesley on the religious, and Wordsworth on the literary side, were the leaders, the word recovered from the blight that had fallen on it; and from the opening of the nineteenth century it stands for 'rapturous intensity of feeling in favour of a person, principle, cause, &c.; passionate eagerness in any pursuit, proceeding from an intense conviction of the worthiness of the object' (*N. E. Dict.*). Even as early as 1771, John Fletcher, in his *Fourth Check*, defines 'the true enthusiasts' as 'those who are really inspired by the grace and love of God.' There is now a tendency to use enthusiast, enthusiastic, and enthusiastically in a good sense; and to retain enthusiastical for the eighteenth-century sense, as equivalent to fanatical.

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*And Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself.—*  
 ACTS xxvi. 24.

I. AND so say all the world, the men who know not God, of all that are of Paul's religion: of every one who is so a follower of him, as he was of Christ. It is true, there is a sort of religion, nay, and it is called Christianity too, which may be practised without any such imputation, which is

generally allowed to be consistent with common sense,—that is, a religion of form, a round of outward duties, performed in a decent, regular manner. You may add orthodoxy thereto, a system of right opinions, yea, and some quantity of heathen morality, and yet not many will pronounce, that ‘much religion hath made you mad.’ But if you aim at the religion of the heart, if you talk of ‘righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,’ then it will not be long before your sentence is passed, ‘Thou art beside thyself.’

2. And it is no compliment which the men of the world pay you herein. They, for once, mean what they say. They not only affirm, but cordially believe, that every man is beside himself, who says, ‘the love of God is shed abroad in’ his ‘heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him’, and that God has enabled him to rejoice in Christ ‘with joy unspeakable and full of glory.’ If a man is indeed alive to God, and dead to all things here below, if he continually sees Him that is invisible, and accordingly walks by faith, and not by sight, then they account it a clear case beyond all dispute ‘much religion hath made him mad.’

3. It is easy to observe, that the determinate thing which the world accounts madness is, that utter contempt of all temporal things, and steady pursuit of things eternal, that divine conviction of things not seen, that rejoicing in the favour of God; that happy, holy love of God, and that testimony of His Spirit with our spirit, that we are the children of God,—that is, in truth, the whole spirit, and life, and power of the religion of Jesus Christ.

4. They will, however, allow, in other respects, the man acts and talks like one in his senses. In other things, he is a reasonable man, it is in these instances only his head is touched. It is therefore acknowledged, that the madness under which he labours is of a particular kind; and accordingly they are accustomed to distinguish it by a particular name, ‘enthusiasm.’

5. A term this, which is exceeding frequently used, which

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Par. 2. ‘Compliment’; in its original sense in English of a neatly turned remark, meaning, as Dr. Johnson says, ‘less than it declares.’

is scarce ever out of some men's mouths, and yet it is exceeding rarely understood, even by those who use it most. It may be, therefore, not unacceptable to serious men, to all who desire to understand what they speak or hear, if I endeavour to explain the meaning of this term—to show what enthusiasm is. It may be an encouragement to those who are unjustly charged therewith, and may possibly be of use to some who are justly charged with it, at least to others who might be so, were they not cautioned against it.

6. As to the word itself, it is generally allowed to be of Greek extraction. But whence the Greek word, *ἐνθουσιασμός*, is derived, none has yet been able to show. Some have endeavoured to derive it from *ἐν Θεῷ*—*in God*, because all enthusiasm has reference to Him. But this is quite forced; there being small resemblance between the word derived, and those they strive to derive it from. Others would derive it from *ἐν θυσίᾳ*—*in sacrifice*; because many of the enthusiasts of old were affected in the most violent manner during the time of sacrifice. Perhaps it is a fictitious word, invented from the noise which some of those made who were so affected.

7. It is not improbable, that one reason why this uncouth word has been retained in so many languages was, because men were not better agreed concerning the meaning than concerning the derivation of it. They therefore adopted the Greek word, because they did not understand it: they did not translate it into their own tongues, because they knew not how to translate it, it having been always a word of a loose, uncertain sense, to which no determinate meaning was affixed.

8. It is not, therefore, at all surprising, that it is so variously taken at this day; different persons understanding it in different senses, quite inconsistent with each other. Some take it in a good sense, for a divine impulse or impression, superior to all the natural faculties, and suspending, for the time, either in whole or in part, both the reason and the outward senses. In this meaning of the word, both the Prophets

6. See introduction above.

7. 'Uncouth'; in its earlier

sense of unfamiliar, unknown; not, as now, ugly, awkward.

of old, and the Apostles, were proper enthusiasts ; being, at divers times, so filled with the Spirit, and so influenced by Him who dwelt in their hearts, that the exercise of their own reason, their senses, and all their natural faculties, being suspended, they were wholly actuated by the power of God, and ' spake ' only ' as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.'

9. Others take the word in an indifferent sense, such as is neither morally good nor evil : thus they speak of the enthusiasm of the poets , of Homer and Virgil in particular. And this a late eminent writer extends so far as to assert, there is no man excellent in his profession, whatsoever it be, who has not in his temper a strong tincture of enthusiasm. By ' enthusiasm ' these appear to understand, an uncommon vigour of thought, a peculiar fervour of spirit, a vivacity and strength not to be found in common men , elevating the soul to greater and higher things than cool reason could have attained.

10. But neither of these is the sense wherein the word ' enthusiasm ' is most usually understood. The generality of men, if no farther agreed, at least agree thus far concerning it, that it is something evil and this is plainly the sentiment of all those who call the religion of the heart ' enthusiasm.' Accordingly, I shall take it in the following pages, as an evil ; a misfortune, if not a fault.

11. As to the nature of enthusiasm, it is undoubtedly a disorder of the mind, and such a disorder as greatly hinders the exercise of reason. Nay, sometimes it wholly sets it aside it not only dims but shuts the eyes of the understanding. It may, therefore, well be accounted a species of madness ; of madness rather than of folly : seeing a fool is properly one who draws wrong conclusions from right premisses , whereas a madman draws right conclusions, but from wrong premisses. And so does an enthusiast. Suppose his premisses true, and

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9. ' A late eminent writer.' Cf. Shaftesbury: *Letter on Enthusiasm*.

11. This is not very well expressed ; it means, ' A fool is one who draws conclusions wrongly from right

premisses ; a madman draws conclusions rightly, but from wrong premisses.' The madman's conclusions are not right ; but they are correctly and logically inferred.

his conclusions would necessarily follow. But here lies his mistake : his premisses are false. He imagines himself to be what he is not : and therefore, setting out wrong, the farther he goes, the more he wanders out of the way.

12. Every enthusiast, then, is properly a madman. Yet his is not an ordinary, but a religious, madness. By 'religious,' I do not mean, that it is any part of religion quite the reverse. Religion is the spirit of a sound mind ; and, consequently, stands in direct opposition to madness of every kind. But I mean, it has religion for its object, it is conversant about religion. And so the enthusiast is generally talking of religion, of God, or of the things of God ; but talking in such a manner that every reasonable Christian may discern the disorder of his mind. Enthusiasm in general may then be described in some such manner as this a religious madness arising from some falsely imagined influence or inspiration of God ; at least, from imputing something to God which ought not to be imputed to Him, or expecting something from God which ought not to be expected from Him.

13. There are innumerable sorts of enthusiasm. Those which are most common, and for that reason most dangerous, I shall endeavour to reduce under a few general heads, that they may be more easily understood and avoided.

The first sort of enthusiasm which I shall mention, is that of those who imagine they have the grace which they have not. Thus some imagine, when it is not so, that they have redemption through Christ, 'even the forgiveness of sins.' These are usually such as 'have no root in themselves' ; no deep repentance, or thorough conviction. 'Therefore they receive the word with joy.' And 'because they have no deepness of earth,' no deep work in their heart, therefore the seed 'immediately springs up.' There is immediately a superficial change, which, together with that light joy, striking in with the pride of their unbroken heart, and with their inordinate self-love, easily persuades them they have already 'tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.'

14. This is properly an instance of the first sort of enthusiasm it is a kind of madness, arising from the imagination that they have that grace which, in truth, they have not so that they only deceive their own souls. Madness it may be justly termed : for the reasonings of these poor men are right, were their premisses good , but as those are a mere creature of their own imagination, so all that is built on them falls to the ground. The foundation of all their reveries is this : they imagine themselves to have faith in Christ. If they had this, they would be ' kings and priests to God ', possessed of ' a kingdom which cannot be moved ' but they have it not , consequently, all their following behaviour is as wide of truth and soberness as that of the ordinary madman, who, fancying himself an earthly king, speaks and acts in that character.

15. There are many other enthusiasts of this sort. Such, for instance, is the fiery zealot for religion ; or, more properly, for the opinions and modes of worship which he dignifies with that name. This man, also, strongly imagines himself to be a believer in Jesus , yea, that he is a champion for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. Accordingly, all his conduct is formed upon that vain imagination. And allowing his supposition to be just, he would have some tolerable plea for his behaviour , whereas now it is evidently the effect of a distempered brain, as well as of a distempered heart.

16. But the most common of all the enthusiasts of this kind are those who imagine themselves Christians, and are not. These abound, not only in all parts of our land, but in most parts of the habitable earth. That they are not Christians, is clear and undeniable, if we believe the oracles of God. For Christians are holy ; these are unholy Christians love God ; these love the world : Christians are humble , these are proud Christians are gentle , these are passionate :

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14. ' Reveries ' ; used here, as generally in the eighteenth century, in the sense of fantastic and unpractical notions. So Palmer, in *Moral Essays on Proverbs*, 325 (1710), says : ' The most ridiculous bigot thinks himself in the right . .

and believes his resveries [sic] acceptable to God.'

16. For Wesley's opinion as to the state of religion in England at this time, see *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Part II (1745).

Christians have the mind which was in Christ ; these are at the utmost distance from it. Consequently, they are no more Christians, than they are archangels. Yet they imagine themselves so to be , and they can give several reasons for it : for they have been *called* so ever since they can remember , they were *christened* many years ago , they embrace the *Christian opinions*, vulgarly termed the Christian or catholic faith , they use the *Christian modes of worship*, as their fathers did before them , they live what is called a good *Christian life*, as the rest of their neighbours do. And who shall presume to think or say that these men are not Christians ?—though without one grain of true faith in Christ, or of real, inward holiness ; without ever having tasted the love of God, or been ‘ made partakers of the Holy Ghost ! ’

17. Ah poor self-deceivers ! Christians ye are not. But you are enthusiasts in a high degree. Physicians, heal yourselves ! But first know your disease : your whole life is enthusiasm , as being all suitable to the imagination, that you have received that grace of God which you have not. In consequence of this grand mistake, you blunder on, day by day, speaking and acting under a character which does in no wise belong to you. Hence arises that palpable, glaring inconsistency that runs through your whole behaviour ; which is an awkward mixture of real Heathenism and imaginary Christianity. Yet still, as you have so vast a majority on your side, you will always carry it by mere dint of numbers, ‘ that you are the only men in your senses, and all are lunatics who are not as you are.’ But this alters not the nature of things. In the sight of God, and His holy angels, yea, and all the children of God upon earth, you are mere madmen, mere enthusiasts all ! Are you not ? Are you not ‘ walking in a vain shadow,’ a shadow of religion, a shadow of happiness ? Are you not still ‘ disquieting yourselves in vain ’ with misfortunes as imaginary as your happiness or religion ? Do you not fancy yourselves great or good—very knowing and very wise ? How long ? Perhaps till death brings you back to your senses, to bewail your folly for ever and ever !

18. A second sort of enthusiasm is that of those who

imagine they have such gifts from God as they have not. Thus some have imagined themselves to be endued with a power of working miracles, of healing the sick by a word or a touch, of restoring sight to the blind: yea, even of raising the dead—a notorious instance of which is still fresh in our own history. Others have undertaken to prophesy, to foretell things to come, and that with the utmost certainty and exactness. But a little time usually convinces these enthusiasts. When plain facts run counter to their predictions, experience

18. These next few paragraphs must have surprised Wesley's critics. These were the very grounds on which Church and the rest had charged him with 'enthusiasm'; and he takes the wind out of their sails by admitting, and indeed declaring, that they were right in regarding such claims as 'enthusiastic.' First as to miraculous powers. Church instances from the *Journal* cases in which both Wesley himself and others are stated to have been instantaneously cured of sicknesses of various kinds in answer to prayer. Wesley (*Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*, v. 1) admits that he has seen things which he believes to have been due to the extraordinary interposition of God; he asserts that there were many witnesses of them besides himself; and that if Church likes to call them miracles, he will not object. But he maintains that his own will had nothing to do with them; he expected nothing less; therefore the work was wholly God's; and he says, as we have already noted, 'I do not know that God hath anyway precluded Himself from thus exerting His sovereign power, from working miracles in any kind or degree, in any age, to the end of the world.' The difference therefore between himself and the Muggletonians and Ranters and others who claim

miraculous powers of healing, is that he does not in the least believe that he can work miracles, although God may of His own good pleasure work miracles in answer to his or any other believer's prayer; whilst they claim to work miracles at their own pleasure, and through some special gift which they possess. Thus he goes to visit a sick man, and prays that he may be cured, not expecting that this will happen except by the natural course of convalescence, but believing that if God will to do so, He can cure him then and there; the enthusiast goes to a similar case, expecting a miraculous cure to be wrought as the result of his word or touch. The distinction is a fine one, but it is perfectly sound. (I have not yet found any other reference to this case of the raising of the dead.)

Bishop Lavington charged Wesley with 'an affectation of prophesying' on two most flimsy pieces of evidence from his *Journal*: (1) that he had told a man whom he had been visiting in Newgate that he believed Satan would separate them for a season; (2) that he had spoken of 'the great work which God intends to work over all the earth.' Church has more sense than to make this charge. The persons referred to as undertaking to prophesy are the Muggletonians and the French prophets, who dealt much in definite

performs what reason could not, and sinks them down into their senses.

19. To the same class belong those who, in preaching or prayer, imagine themselves to be so influenced by the Spirit of God, as, in fact, they are not. I am sensible, indeed, that without Him we can do nothing, more especially in our public ministry, that all our preaching is utterly vain, unless it be attended with His power, and all our prayer, unless His Spirit therein help our infirmities. I know, if we do not both preach and pray by the Spirit, it is all but lost labour, seeing the help that is done upon earth He doeth it Himself, who worketh all in all. But this does not affect the case before us. Though there is a real influence of the Spirit of God, there is also an imaginary one: and many there are who mistake the one for the other. Many suppose themselves to be under that influence, when they are not, when it is far from them. And many others suppose they are more under that influence than they really are. Of this number, I fear, are all they who imagine that God dictates the very words they speak, and that, consequently, it is impossible they should speak anything

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predictions as to the end of the world. For the latter see note on Sermon XLV, iv. 2.

19. This was another of Church's charges; 'he talks in the style of inspired persons.' Wesley answers: 'No otherwise inspired than you are, if you love God.' No preaching is worth anything unless the preacher has an inspired message to deliver. 'Every one who is to speak for Him must hear Him speak.' The Rev. H. H. Chettle once told me that he had never chosen a text in his life; his texts were always 'given to him.' The true preacher must be conscious of a divine inspiration both in the preparation and the delivery of his sermons. The enthusiast, or fanatic (for this latter word better expresses to modern ears what Wesley is talking about), is equally convinced

that he is speaking under divine impulse; the difference is that he is mistaken. He thinks that he has an inspiration which he really has not. How then are we to distinguish between the true and the false inspiration? In Sermon XI Wesley suggests three tests: (1) Is their doctrine in harmony with the Scriptures? (In applying this, however, we must be careful to distinguish between our own opinion as to the teaching of the Scriptures, and that teaching itself.) (2) What are the fruits of their doctrine on themselves? (3) What are the fruits of their doctrine on them that hear them? It may be added that the fanatic is marked by his assumption of a tone of infallible authority, and of a special inspiration peculiar to himself.

amiss, either as to the matter or manner of it. It is well known how many enthusiasts of this sort also have appeared during the present century, some of whom speak in a far more authoritative manner than either St. Paul or any of the Apostles.

20. The same sort of enthusiasm, though in a lower degree, is frequently found in men of a private character. They may likewise imagine themselves to be influenced or directed by the Spirit when they are not. I allow, 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His'; and that if ever we either think, speak, or act aright, it is through the assistance of that blessed Spirit. But how many impute things to Him, or expect things from Him, without any rational or scriptural ground! Such are they who imagine, they either do or shall receive *particular directions* from God, not only in points of importance, but in things of no moment; in the most trifling circumstances of life. Whereas in these cases God has given us our own reason for a guide, though never excluding the secret assistance of His Spirit.

21. To this kind of enthusiasm they are peculiarly exposed,

20. Wesley goes a little too far in this paragraph, and it is inconsistent with what he says later in par. 28. He allows here the possibility of direction from God in matters of importance; but not in things of no moment. Unconsciously he falls into the error, common in his time, of regarding God as merely the transcendent ruler of the universe, interfering in the direction of our lives only on important occasions, and from outside, like Paley's divine watchmaker. Whereas He is also immanent in us and in all His works; and is not without His part in any detail, however seemingly trivial, of all that happens. This does not mean that He supersedes our own individuality, or inhibits the use of our reason; but that in all things He by His Spirit dwelling in us co-

operates with us. 'The *steps* of a good man are ordered by the Lord,' not only the general *path* of his life. And, moreover, how are we to know which of the circumstances of our life are 'important,' and which are 'of no moment'? Often what appears to be a trifle determines the whole course of a man's career. Our only safety is in walking all the time in conscious fellowship with God, and trusting to Him for guidance every moment. Wesley practically admits this in the last sentence of the paragraph. What he really means is that we are not to look for direction by signs, or voices, or other external indications; and this is sound enough teaching, only it applies also to what he calls 'points of importance.'

21. One of Church's charges is,

who expect to be directed of God, either in spiritual things or in common life, in what is justly called an *extraordinary* manner : I mean, by visions or dreams, by strong impressions or sudden impulses on the mind. I do not deny, that God has, of old times, manifested His will in this manner, or, that He can do so now : nay, I believe He does, in some very rare instances. But how frequently do men mistake herein ! How are they misled by pride, and a warm imagination, to ascribe such impulses or impressions, dreams or visions, to God, as are utterly unworthy of Him ! Now this is all pure enthusiasm, all as wide of religion, as it is of truth and soberness.

22. Perhaps some may ask, ' Ought we not then to inquire what is the will of God in all things ? And ought not His will to be the rule of our practice ? ' Unquestionably it ought. But how is a sober Christian to make this inquiry ? to know what is the will of God ? Not by waiting for supernatural dreams ; not by expecting God to reveal it in visions, not by looking for any *particular impressions* or sudden impulses on his mind : no, but by consulting the oracles of God. ' To the law and to the testimony ! ' This is the general method of knowing what is ' the holy and acceptable will of God.'

23. ' But how shall I know what is the will of God, in such and such a particular case ? The thing proposed is,

' His own dreams must be regarded as oracles.' His *Journal* up to this time records about four cases of remarkable fulfilment of dreams ; but they were not his own, but other people's. His answer is, ' I desire neither my dreams nor my waking thoughts may be regarded at all, unless just so far as they agree with the oracles of God.' In our present very imperfect knowledge of the psychology of dreams, it is unsafe to be dogmatic ; but it can hardly be denied that it is possible for the Spirit of God to influence our dreams ; and cases of such influence are fairly common both in the Bible and in the biographies of good men since. Dr. Horton (*Verbum Dei*, p. 48) puts the

matter very sanely : ' It seems to be clear that God uses the state of semi-consciousness and suspended will-action to present His commandments, and sometimes to show His purposes for the future, to His servants who wait for Him. It is scarcely necessary to say that our hours of full consciousness must be very fully surrendered to God if He is thus to appear to us in the hours of half-consciousness, and that our day must be very strenuously and continuously given to Him, if the night is to be the occasion of His closer communion with us.'

' Warm imagination ' ; that is, heated, feverish imagination.

23. Another of Church's charges

in itself, of an indifferent nature, and so left undetermined in Scripture.' I answer, the Scripture itself gives you a general rule, applicable to all particular cases: 'The will of God is our sanctification.' It is His will that we should be inwardly and outwardly holy; that we should be good, and do good, in every kind and in the highest degree whereof we are capable. Thus far we tread upon firm ground. This is as clear as the shining of the sun. In order, therefore, to know what is the will of God in a particular case, we have only to apply this general rule.

against Wesley was his use of lots, and of the casual opening of the Bible in order to find out the will of God in particular cases. Several examples of both methods are recorded in the *Journal*; and Wesley says in regard to them (*Principles of a Methodist Farther Explained*, iv. 3): 'At some rare times, when I have been in great distress of soul, or in utter uncertainty how to act in an important case which required a speedy determination, after using all other means that occurred, I have cast lots, or opened the Bible.' He defends himself on the grounds that this method is not forbidden in the Scriptures, and was resorted to on certain occasions there recorded; that he never did it till he had exhausted all other means of reaching a decision; and that he therefore still subscribes to the declaration of the Moravian Church: 'We have a peculiar esteem for lots, and accordingly use them, both in public and private, to decide points of importance, when the reasons brought on each side appear to be of equal weight.' This was written in 1746; the latest case of sortilege recorded in the *Journal* took place in February 1744, in the case of Richard Viney. Bibliomancy was a heritage from the old Greek and Roman practice of divination by the casual opening of

Homer and Virgil; and the use of *Sortes Virgilianae* long survived, and is not yet altogether extinct. The early Christians substituted the Bible for the heathen poets; and 'pricking for a text' is not unknown even now. Naturally one lucky hit is enough to confirm the faith of the superstitious diviner, in spite of a hundred misses. My mother, when I was a boy, used always to prick a text for each of us when we got back from the Watch-night; and I remember well the text she pricked for my brother on one such occasion was: 'He will surely violently turn and toss thee like a ball into a large country; there thou shalt die.' That same year, quite unexpectedly, he came out to Australia, where he died. The cases recorded in the *Journal* are absurdly inconclusive in most instances; see, for example, the story in March 1739 of the Bristol journey, when no less than eight passages were successively 'pricked,' all of them quite irrelevant—the last was 'And Ahaz slept with his fathers'!—and at last in despair they cast lots on the question. From Wesley's silence in this sermon on these two points, I think we may safely conjecture that he had come by this time to see the superstitious and 'enthusiastic' character of such methods of ascertaining the will of God.

24. Suppose, for instance, it were proposed to a reasonable man to marry, or to enter into a new business : in order to know whether this is the will of God, being assured, ' It is the will of God concerning me, that I should be as holy and do as much good as I can,' he has only to inquire, ' In which of these states can I be most holy. and do the most good ? ' And this is to be determined, partly by reason, and partly by experience. Experience tells him what advantages he has in his present state, either for being or doing good ; and reason is to show, what he certainly or probably will have in the state proposed. By comparing these, he is to judge which of the two may most conduce to his being and doing good : and as far as he knows this, so far he is certain what is the will of God.

25. Meantime, the assistance of His Spirit is supposed, during the whole process of the inquiry. Indeed it is not easy to say, in how many ways that assistance is conveyed. He may bring many circumstances to our remembrance ; may place others in a stronger and clearer light ; may insensibly open our mind to receive conviction, and fix that conviction upon our heart. And to a concurrence of many circumstances of this kind, in favour of what is acceptable in His sight, He may superadd such an unutterable peace of mind, and so uncommon a measure of His love, as will leave us no possibility of doubting, that this, even this, is His will concerning us.

26. This is the plain, scriptural, rational way to know what is the will of God in a particular case. But considering how seldom this way is taken, and what a flood of enthusiasm must needs break in on those who endeavour to know the will of God by unscriptural, irrational ways ; it were to be wished that the expression itself were far more sparingly used. The using it, as some do, on the most trivial occasions, is a plain breach of the third commandment. It is a gross

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26. What good sense this is ! We have still some sanctimonious pietists who talk in this unctuous way about the ' will of God,' and dare not even announce that the Rev. Mr. Smith will preach here next Sunday with-

out inserting a ' D.V.' A witty satirist (this is Wesley's favourite vague way of quoting ! But I have quite forgotten who it was !) once said, ' After a careful examination of several hundred documents contain-

way of taking the name of God in vain, and betrays great irreverence toward Him. Would it not be far better, then, to use other expressions, which are not liable to such objections? For example instead of saying, on any particular occasion, 'I want to know what is the will of God', would it not be better to say, 'I want to know what will be most for my improvement, and what will make me most useful?' This way of speaking is clear and unexceptionable: it is putting the matter on a plain, scriptural issue, and that without any danger of enthusiasm.

27. A third very common sort of enthusiasm (if it does not coincide with the former) is that of those who think to attain the end without using the means, by the immediate power of God. If, indeed, those means were providentially withheld, they would not fall under this charge. God can, and sometimes does, in cases of this nature, exert His own immediate power. But they who expect this when they have those means, and will not use them, are proper enthusiasts. Such are they who expect to understand the holy Scriptures, without reading them, and meditating thereon, yea, without using all such helps as are in their power, and may probably conduce to that end. Such are they who designedly speak in the public assembly without any premeditation. I say 'designedly'; because there may be such circumstances as, at some times, make it unavoidable. But whoever despises that great means of speaking profitably is so far an enthusiast.

28. It may be expected that I should mention what some have accounted a fourth sort of enthusiasm, namely, the imagining those things to be owing to the providence of God which are not owing thereto. But I doubt: I know not what things they are which are not owing to the provi-

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ing these mystic letters, I have come to the conclusion that they mean "Whether God likes it or not."'

27. The idea that the Spirit of God is honoured by the neglect of preparation for the pulpit is a form of enthusiasm which has found much acceptance amongst certain sects.

'I always try,' said one of these good men to a friend of mine, 'to have my mind perfectly blank when I enter the pulpit.' 'That was what I thought,' said my friend, 'when I last heard you preach.'

28. In Sermon LXVII, on Divine Providence, 23, Wesley says: 'But

dence of God, in ordering, or at least in governing, of which, this is not either directly or remotely concerned. I except nothing but sin; and even in the sins of others, I see the providence of God to me. I do not say His *general* providence, for this I take to be a sounding word, which means just nothing. And if there be a *particular* providence, it must extend to all persons and all things. So our Lord understood it, or He could never have said, 'Even the hairs of your head are all numbered'; and, 'Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without' the will of 'your Father' which is in heaven. But if it be so, if God preside *universis tanquam singulis, et singulis tanquam universis*; 'over the whole universe as over every single person, and over every single person as over the whole universe'; what is it (except only our own sins) which we are not to ascribe to the providence of God? So that I cannot apprehend there is any room here for the charge of enthusiasm.

29. If it be said, the charge lies here: 'When you impute *this* to Providence, you imagine yourself the peculiar favourite of heaven': I answer, you have forgot some of the last words I spoke: *Praesidet universis tanquam singulis*, 'His providence is over all men in the universe, as much as over any single person.' Do you not see that he who, believing this, imputes anything which befalls him to Providence, does not therein make himself any more the favourite of heaven, than he supposes every man under heaven to be? Therefore you have no pretence, upon this ground, to charge him with enthusiasm.

I have not done with this same general providence. By the grace of God, I will sift it to the bottom; and I hope to show it is such stark, staring nonsense, as every man of sense ought to be utterly ashamed of. You say you allow a general providence, but deny a particular one. And what is a general, of whatever kind it be, that includes no particulars? Is not every general necessarily made up of its several particulars? The quotation is from St. Augustine, and is quoted again

in Sermon LXVII, 26, as 'that fine saying of St. Austin.' The nearest I can find to it is in *Confessions*, iii. 11, 'O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum, tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes, tanquam singulos.' The same thought may occur somewhere else in Augustine in the words given by Wesley; but he quotes very inaccurately, and often obviously from memory. Indeed this very passage is quoted differently here and in Sermon LXVII.

30. Against every sort of this it behoves us to guard with the utmost diligence, considering the dreadful effects it has so often produced, and which, indeed, naturally result from it. Its immediate offspring is pride, it continually increases this source from whence it flows, and hereby it alienates us more and more from the favour and from the life of God. It dries up the very springs of faith and love, of righteousness and true holiness; seeing all these flow from grace but 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace' only 'to the humble.'

31. Together with pride there will naturally arise an unadvisable and unconvincible spirit. So that into whatever error or fault the enthusiast falls, there is small hope of his recovery. For reason will have little weight with him (as has been frequently and justly observed) who imagines he is led by an higher guide,—by the immediate wisdom of God. And as he grows in pride, so he must grow in unadvisableness and in stubbornness also. He must be less and less capable of being convinced, less susceptible of persuasion; more and more attached to his own judgement and his own will, till he is altogether fixed and immovable.

32. Being thus fortified both against the grace of God, and against all advice and help from man, he is wholly left to the guidance of his own heart, and of the king of the children of pride. No marvel, then, that he is daily more rooted and grounded in contempt of all mankind, in furious anger, in every unkind disposition, in every earthly and devilish temper. Neither can we wonder at the terrible outward effects which have flowed from such dispositions in all ages; even all manner of wickedness, all the works of darkness, committed by those who call themselves Christians, while they wrought with greediness such things as were hardly named even among the Heathens.

Such is the nature, such the dreadful effects, of that many-headed monster, Enthusiasm! From the consideration of which we may now draw some plain inferences, with regard to our own practice.

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32. 'That many-headed monster'; the populace in Horace, Ep. i. 1, 76, adapted from the phrase applied to 'Belua multorum es capitum.'

33. And, first, if enthusiasm be a term, though so frequently used, yet so rarely understood, take you care not to talk of you know not what ; not to use the word till you understand it. As in all other points, so likewise in this, learn to think before you speak. First know the meaning of this hard word , and then use it, if need require.

34. But if so few, even among men of education and learning, much more among the common sort of men, understand this dark, ambiguous word, or have any fixed notion of what it means , then, secondly, beware of judging or calling any man an enthusiast, upon common report. This is by no means a sufficient ground for giving any name of reproach to any man ; least of all is it a sufficient ground for so black a term of reproach as this. The more evil it contains, the more cautious you should be how you apply it to any one , to bring so heavy an accusation, without full proof, being neither consistent with justice nor mercy.

35. But if enthusiasm be so great an evil, beware you are not entangled therewith yourself. Watch and pray, that you fall not into the temptation. It easily besets those who fear or love God. O beware you do not think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Do not imagine you have attained that grace of God which you have not attained. You may have much joy , you may have a measure of love , and yet not have living faith. Cry unto God, that He would not suffer you, blind as you are, to go out of the way ; that you may never fancy yourself a believer in Christ, till Christ is revealed in you, and till His Spirit witnesses with your spirit that you are a child of God.

36. Beware you are not a fiery, persecuting enthusiast. Do not imagine that God has called you (just contrary to the spirit of Him you style your Master) to destroy men's lives, and not to save them. Never dream of forcing men into the ways of God. Think yourself, and let think. Use no constraint in matters of religion. Even those who are farthest out of the way never compel to come in by any other means than reason, truth, and love.

37. Beware you do not run with the common herd of en-

thusiasts, fancying you are a Christian when you are not. Presume not to assume that venerable name, unless you have a clear, scriptural title thereto, unless you have the mind which was in Christ, and walk as He also walked.

38. Beware you do not fall into the second sort of enthusiasm,—fancying you have those gifts from God which you have not. Trust not in visions or dreams, in sudden impressions, or strong impulses of any kind. Remember, it is not by these you are to know what is the will of God on any particular occasion, but by applying the plain Scripture rule, with the help of experience and reason, and the ordinary assistance of the Spirit of God. Do not lightly take the name of God in your mouth; do not talk of the will of God on every trifling occasion but let your words, as well as your actions, be all tempered with reverence and godly fear.

39. Beware, lastly, of imagining you shall obtain the end without using the means conducive to it. God can give the end without any means at all, but you have no reason to think He will. Therefore constantly and carefully use all those means which He has appointed to be the ordinary channels of His grace. Use every means which either reason or Scripture recommends, as conducive (through the free love of God in Christ) either to the obtaining or increasing any of the gifts of God. Thus expect a daily growth in that pure and holy religion which the world always did, and always will, call 'enthusiasm'; but which, to all who are saved from real enthusiasm, from merely nominal Christianity, is 'the wisdom of God, and the power of God', the glorious image of the Most High, 'righteousness and peace', a 'fountain of living water, springing up into everlasting life'!

## SERMON XXXIII

### A CAUTION AGAINST BIGOTRY

I HAVE not found any record of the preaching of this sermon. It was apparently written for publication in the third volume of the Sermons (1750). It is a remarkable exhibition of breadth of view and readiness to co-operate with all sincere and earnest Christians, especially when it is remembered that Wesley was by birth and training a High Anglican, and that at this time he was being attacked and vilified on all hands by members both of his own Church and of the various dissenting bodies. When there are so many indications of a desire for closer union amongst the Churches of Christ as are happily manifesting themselves to-day, this and the following sermon ought to be republished and widely circulated.

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*And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us : and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not.—MARK ix. 38, 39.*

1. IN the preceding verses we read, that after the twelve had been disputing 'which of them should be the greatest, Jesus took a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, said unto them, 'Whosoever shall receive one of these little children in My name, receiveth Me, and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me' only, 'but Him that sent Me.' Then 'John answered,' that is,

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Par. 1. The better reading is simply 'John said to him'; not 'answered.' The connexion of the text with the preceding paragraph in the Gospel lies in the phrase 'in My name.' Jesus had just said, 'Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me'; John then practically asks, 'But does doing anything in Thy name make it acceptable to Thee? We saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we tried to stop him; were we then wrong?' Further, the disciples had been disputing on the way, which of them

said, with reference to what our Lord had spoken just before, 'Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.' As if he had said, 'Ought we to have received him? In receiving him, should we have received Thee? Ought we not rather to have forbidden him? Did not we do well therein?' 'But Jesus said, Forbid him not.'

2. The same passage is recited by St. Luke, and almost in the same words. But it may be asked, 'What is this to us, seeing no man now *casts out devils*? Has not the power of doing this been withdrawn from the Church, for twelve or fourteen hundred years? How then are *we* concerned in the case here proposed, or in our Lord's decision of it?'

3. Perhaps more nearly than is commonly imagined, the case proposed being no uncommon case. That we may reap our full advantage from it, I design to show, first, in what sense men may, and do, now cast out devils; secondly, what we may understand by, 'He followeth not us.' I shall, thirdly, explain our Lord's direction, 'Forbid him not', and conclude with an inference from the whole.

I. 1. I am, in the first place, to show, in what sense men may, and do, now cast out devils.

In order to have the clearest view of this, we should remember, that (according to the scriptural account) as God dwells and works in the children of light, so the devil dwells and works in the children of darkness. As the Holy Spirit

should be the greatest in the Kingdom; and it was natural that they should feel jealous of any one who was not in their circle being permitted to take part in the work of their Master. This would interfere with their exclusive claim to office and honour in the Court of the Messiah at Jerusalem which their imagination pictured to them as being about to be established by our Lord.

I. 1. 'The devil dwells and works,' &c. The teaching of the New Testa-

ment is that there are hosts of evil spirits, inhabiting the atmosphere, and acting under the control of 'the prince of the power of the air.' They are known as 'demons,' and their master as the Devil, though this distinction is obscured in the A.V., which translates 'demon' as 'devil.' Whatever these evil spirits do may be properly described as done by the Devil, whose agents they are; and so in popular language the Devil is often spoken of, as in this sermon, as being practically omni-

possesses the souls of good men, so the evil spirit possesses the souls of the wicked. Hence it is that the Apostle terms him 'the god of this world', from the uncontrolled power he has over worldly men. Hence our blessed Lord styles him 'the prince of this world'; so absolute is his dominion over it. And hence St. John 'We know that we are of God, and' all who are not of God, 'the whole world,' *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται*,—not *lieth in wickedness*, but '*lieth in the wicked one*'; lives and moves in him, as they who are not of the world do in God.

2. For the devil is not to be considered only as 'a roaring lion, going about seeking whom he may devour', nor barely as a subtle enemy, who cometh unawares upon poor souls, and 'leads them captive at his will', but as he who dwelleth in them, and walketh in them, who ruleth the darkness or

present. This is a good case for the application of the legal maxim, 'Qui facit per alium, facit per se'; and no great harm is done if we remember that the prince of this world works not personally, but through his agents. The tendency just now is to regard the Devil as being merely a convenient general term for all the forces in the world that make for evil, and which are imaginatively personified in him; and to explain our Lord's undeniable teaching about him as an accommodation to the current belief of His time. If all the evil in the world were the result of the survival of the tiger and the ape in man, such a view might be possible; and the Devil would be much the same as what St. Paul calls 'the old man' in ourselves, and his demons the particular temptations which arise from our unregenerate nature. But what of plague and pestilence and famine and earthquake and storm? And what of the manifest unification of human ambitions and selfishnesses in order to bring about such catastrophes as

the late war? There seems every proof of a malevolent intelligence at work in the world; and, apart from the hope for the triumph of righteousness which we have learned from Christ, there would be no alternative between some system of Dualism—such as Zarathustra taught, Ahriman ever contending with Ormuzd in a battle of uncertain issue—and blank Atheism. 'If I did not believe in the Devil,' said a good man, 'I could not believe in God.' At the same time, belief in the personality of the Devil is not an article of any Christian creed; and every man is free to use his own judgement in this matter. Whatever view may be taken, the main argument of this sermon is not affected. The man who casts out devils is the one who by his example and teaching saves men from their sins, and influences them for good.

Wesley's translation of 1 John v. 19, 'in the Evil One,' is supported by most modern commentators, including Dr. G. G. Findlay and the R.V.

wickedness of this world (of worldly men and all their dark designs and actions), by keeping possession of their hearts, setting up his throne there, and bringing every thought into obedience to himself. Thus the 'strong one armed keepeth his house', and if this 'unclean spirit' sometimes 'go out of a man,' yet he often returns with 'seven spirits worse than himself, and they enter in and dwell there.' Nor can he be idle in his dwelling. He is continually 'working in' these 'children of disobedience.' He works in them with power, with mighty energy, transforming them into his own likeness, effacing all the remains of the image of God, and preparing them for every evil word and work.

3. It is, therefore, an unquestionable truth, that the god and prince of this world still possesses all who know not God. Only the manner wherein he possesses them now differs from that wherein he did it of old time. *Then* he frequently tormented their bodies as well as souls, and that openly, without any disguise *now* he torments their souls only (unless in some rare cases), and that as covertly as possible. The reason of this difference is plain: it was then his aim to drive mankind into superstition, therefore, he wrought as openly as he could. But it is his aim to drive us into infidelity; therefore, he works as privately as he can: for the more secret he is, the more he prevails.

4. Yet, if we may credit historians, there are countries, even now, where he works as openly as aforetime. 'But why in savage and barbarous countries only? Why not in Italy, France, or England?' For a very plain reason he knows his men, and he knows what he has to do with each. To Laplanders he appears barefaced; because he is to

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4. The Jews of our Lord's time ascribed many forms of nervous affliction, such as madness, epilepsy, melancholia, and the like, to demoniacal possession; and who shall say that there was not some truth in their opinion? It is difficult to go through the wards of our lunatic asylums without a sense of demoniac

influence at work in the wreck of human intelligences. Wesley mentions Lapland because it has had for centuries the reputation of being the home of diabolical witchcraft. Giles Fletcher, writing in 1591 (*Of the Russe Commonwealth*), says of the Laplanders, 'For practice of witchcraft and sorcery they pass all

fix them in superstition and gross idolatry. But with you he is pursuing a different point. He is to make you idolize yourselves ; to make you wiser in your own eyes than God Himself, than all the oracles of God. Now, in order to this, he must not appear in his own shape : that would frustrate his design. No : he uses all his art to make you deny his being, till he has you safe in his own place.

5. He reigns, therefore, although in a different way, yet as absolute in one land as in the other. He has the gay Italian infidel in his teeth, as sure as the wild Tartar. But he is fast asleep in the mouth of the lion, who is too wise to wake him out of sleep. So he only plays with him for the present, and when he pleases, swallows him up !

The god of this world holds his English worshippers full as fast as those in Lapland. But it is not his business to affright them, lest they should fly to the God of heaven. The prince of darkness, therefore, does not appear, while he rules over these his willing subjects. The conqueror holds his captives so much the safer, because they imagine themselves at liberty. Thus ' the strong one armed keepeth his house, and his goods are in peace ', neither the Deist nor nominal Christian suspects he is there : so he and they are perfectly at peace with each other.

6. All this while he works with energy in them. He blinds the eyes of their understanding, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ cannot shine upon them. He chains their souls down to earth and hell, with the chains of their own vile affections. He binds them down to the earth, by love of the world, love of money, of pleasure, of praise. And by pride, envy, anger, hate, revenge, he causes their souls to draw nigh unto hell ; acting the more secure and uncontrolled, because they know not that he acts at all.

nations in the world ' ; and Milton (*Paradise Lost*, ii. 665) compares sin to the night-hag ' riding through the air to dance with Lapland witches.' Our missionaries have found innumerable cases of demoniac possession of the physical type in China,

Korea, and India, as well as in the Pacific Islands. See Dennis, *Christian Missions and Social Progress*, i. 312.

6. ' Secure ' ; that is, free from anxiety, in the older sense of the word.

7. But how easily may we know the cause from its effects ! These are sometimes gross and palpable. So they were in the most refined of the heathen nations. Go no farther than the admired, the virtuous Romans, and you will find these, when at the height of their learning and glory, 'filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness, full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, despiteful, proud, boasters, disobedient to parents, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.'

8. The strongest parts of this description are confirmed by one whom some may think a more unexceptionable witness. I mean, their brother Heathen, Dion Cassius; who observes, that, before Caesar's return from Gaul, not only gluttony and lewdness of every kind were open and barefaced, not only falsehood, injustice, and unmercifulness abounded, in public courts, as well as private families, but the most outrageous robberies, rapine, and murders were so frequent in all parts of Rome, that few men went out of doors without making their wills, as not knowing if they should return alive!

9. As gross and palpable are the works of the devil among many (if not all) the modern Heathens. The natural religion of the Creeks, Cherokees, Chickasaws, and all other Indians bordering on our southern settlements (not of a few

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7. This description is from Rom. i. 29, &c. The histories of Tacitus and Suetonius and the Satires of Juvenal confirm this dreadful picture at all points.

8. Dion Cassius Cocceianus lived in the second half of the second century A.D., and wrote a history of Rome in Greek. In the latter part of Book XL he describes the condition of things in Rome during the two or three years before the return of Caesar from Gaul in 49 B.C.; but it is hardly fair to take these as typical of the state of the city—everything was in a condition of

dissolution. It was no more a normal Rome than Paris was a normal Paris during the Reign of Terror or the period of the Commune.

9. Wesley became acquainted with these various Indian tribes during his residence in Georgia, and records his impressions of them at the end of his Sixth Savannah Journal. The Creeks numbered about 25,000, and their lands were some 400 miles from Savannah on the north of the Alatamahaw river. Ingham went to live amongst them, and tried to draw up a grammar and vocabulary of their language. Their chief,

single men, but of entire nations), is to torture all their prisoners from morning till night, till at length they roast them to death ; and upon the slightest undesigned provocation, to come behind and shoot any of their own countrymen ! Yea, it is a common thing among them, for the son, if he thinks his father lives too long, to knock out his brains ; and for a mother, if she is tired of her children, to fasten stones about their necks, and throw three or four of them into the river, one after another !

10. It were to be wished, that none but Heathens had practised such gross, palpable works of the devil. But we dare not say so. Even in cruelty and bloodshed, how little have the Christians come behind them ! And not the Spaniards or Portuguese alone, butchering thousands in South America not the Dutch only in the East Indies, or the French in North America, following the Spaniards step by step : our own countrymen, too, have wantoned in blood, and exterminated

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Tomo-chachi, with his wife and son, was taken to England by Oglethorpe in 1734, and had an interview with George II at Kensington. But little progress was made in Christianizing them at this time ; and Wesley describes them as infected with love of drink, crafty, ungrateful, and indisposed to learn anything. They have since been evangelized by the Methodist Church, and in 1909 their chief was an elder in the M.E. Church South. For the Cherokees see note on Sermon XXIII, 9. The Chicasaws lay to the north of the Creeks ; Wesley describes them as gluttonous, indolent, cruel, but the most valiant in war of all the Indians. He got his knowledge of all these tribes mainly from traders, and they were probably not by any means as black as he paints them.

10. The cruelties of the Spaniards to the Indians of Mexico and Peru can be found described in Prescott's volumes on the conquest of these

countries in the sixteenth century. But it is hardly fair to class with them the methods of the Dutch in their colonization of the Sundas and Moluccas in the seventeenth century, or of the French in their founding of settlements in North America and Canada. No doubt many natives were killed, and they were probably treated with scant consideration by the European colonists ; but there is no proof of systematic and fiendish cruelty, such as Cortes and Pizarro practised in South America.

It is again most unjust to say that our own countrymen have wantoned in blood, &c. Judging by a paragraph in Sermon LXIX (ii. 4) Wesley is thinking of the conquest of India by the English. He says there : ' In what a condition is the large and populous empire of Indostan ! How many hundred thousands of the poor, quiet people have been destroyed, and their carcases left as the dung of the earth ! ' Up to this

whole nations ; plainly proving thereby what spirit it is that dwells and works in the children of disobedience.

11. These monsters might almost make us overlook the works of the devil that are wrought in our own country. But, alas ! we cannot open our eyes even here, without seeing them on every side. Is it a small proof of his power, that common swearers, drunkards, whoremongers, adulterers, thieves, robbers, sodomites, murderers, are still found in every part of our land ? How triumphant does the prince of this world reign in all these children of disobedience ?

12. He less openly, but no less effectually, works in dissemblers, tale-bearers, liars, slanderers ; in oppressors and extortioners ; in the perjured, the seller of his friend, his honour, his conscience, his country. And yet these may talk of religion or conscience still ; of honour, virtue, and public spirit ! But they can no more deceive Satan than they can God. He likewise knows those that are his : and a great multitude they are, out of every nation and people, of whom he has full possession at this day.

13. If you consider this, you cannot but see in what sense men may now also cast out devils : yea, and every minister of Christ does cast them out, if his Lord's work prosper in his hand.

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time (1750) the fighting in India had been against the French, not the natives ; and later the opponents of the English were such ' poor, quiet people ' (!) as Surajah Dowlah, of Blackhole notoriety, Hyder Ali, and Tippoo Sahib. What ' whole nations ' Wesley believed that the English had wantonly exterminated, I cannot imagine.

11. The greatest peril of the ardent social reformer, especially when he is intoxicated by the excitement of a large and sympathetic audience, is the exaggeration of the evils against which he is fighting. Drunkenness, prostitution, gambling, meet us in the streets of our great cities, and

the newspapers serve us up with our breakfast every morning a highly seasoned dish of thefts and criminal assaults and murders. From these materials it is easy to construct an appalling picture of the fearful condition of morality in England or in Australia. But all the same the great majority of our people are decent, law-abiding, kindly folk, neither drunken nor unclean nor criminal. Wesley was not free from this defect of his quality, and his lurid accounts of the condition, both of what he calls the heathens and the Christians, often need a good deal of qualification before they can be accepted as accurate.

By the power of God attending his word, he brings these sinners to repentance, an entire inward as well as outward change, from all evil to all good. And this is, in a sound sense, to cast out devils, out of the souls wherein they had hitherto dwelt. The strong one can no longer keep his house. A stronger than he is come upon him, and hath cast him out, and taken possession for himself, and made it an habitation of God through His Spirit. Here, then, the energy of Satan ends, and the Son of God 'destroys the works of the devil.' The understanding of the sinner is now enlightened, and his heart sweetly drawn to God. His desires are refined, his affections purified, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he grows in grace till he is not only holy in heart, but in all manner of conversation.

14. All this is indeed the work of God. It is God alone who can cast out Satan. But He is generally pleased to do this by man, as an instrument in His hand: who is then said to cast out devils in His name, by His power and authority. And He sends whom He will send upon this great work; but usually such as man would never have thought of: for 'His ways are not as our ways, neither His thoughts as our thoughts.' Accordingly He chooses the weak to confound the mighty; the foolish to confound the wise; for this plain reason, that He may secure the glory to Himself, that 'no flesh may glory in His sight.'

II. 1. But shall we not forbid one who thus 'casteth out devils,' if 'he followeth not us'? This, it seems, was both the judgement and practice of the Apostle, till he referred the case to his Master. 'We forbid him,' saith he, 'because he followeth not us!' which he supposed to be a very sufficient

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14. The idea that God employs weak and foolish messengers 'that He may secure the glory to Himself' is put in a way that suggests a very unworthy and almost grotesque conception of the Almighty. Of course what is meant is that God

works by apparently incompetent agents, in order that men may not attribute the results of their work to human learning or eloquence or influence, but to the power of the Holy Spirit. Wesley has in mind his own Helpers and Assistants.

reason. What we may understand by this expression, 'He followeth not us,' is the next point to be considered.

The lowest circumstance we can understand thereby, is, He has no outward connexion with us. We do not labour in conjunction with each other. He is not our fellow-helper in the gospel. And indeed whensoever our Lord is pleased to send many labourers into His harvest, they cannot all act in subordination to, or connexion with, each other. Nay, they cannot all have personal acquaintance with, nor be so much as known to, one another. Many there will necessarily be, in different parts of the harvest, so far from having any mutual intercourse, that they will be as absolute strangers to each other, as if they had lived in different ages. And concerning any of these whom we know not, we may doubtless say, 'He followeth not us.'

2. A second meaning of this expression may be, He is not of our party. It has long been matter of melancholy consideration to all who pray for the peace of Jerusalem, that so many several parties are still subsisting among those who are all styled Christians. This has been particularly observable in our own countrymen, who have been continually dividing from each other, upon points of no moment, and many times such as religion had no concern in. The most trifling circumstances have given rise to different parties, which have continued for many generations, and each of these would be ready to object to one who was on the other side, 'He followeth not us.'

3. That expression may mean, thirdly, He differs from us in our religious opinions. There was a time when all Christians were of one mind, as well as of one heart, such great grace was upon them all, when they were first filled with the Holy Ghost! But how short a space did this blessing continue! How soon was that unanimity lost! and difference of opinion sprang up again, even in the Church of Christ,—

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II. 3. The controversy between the Jewish Christians, who regarded Christianity as the flower of Judaism, and therefore demanded that all

Gentiles who became Christians should enter through the gate of circumcision and should observe the law of Moses, and the followers

and that not in nominal but in real Christians, nay, in the very chief of them, the Apostles themselves! Nor does it appear that the difference which then began was ever entirely removed. We do not find that even those pillars in the temple of God, so long as they remained upon earth, were ever brought to think alike, to be of one mind, particularly with regard to the ceremonial law. It is therefore no way surprising, that infinite varieties of opinion should now be found in the Christian Church. A very probable consequence of this is, that whenever we see any 'casting out devils,' he will be one that, in this sense, 'followeth not us'—that is not of our opinion. It is scarce to be imagined he will be of our mind in all points, even of religion. He may very probably think in a different manner from us, even on several subjects of importance; such as the nature and use of the moral law, the eternal decrees of God, the sufficiency and efficacy of His grace, and the perseverance of His children.

4. He may differ from us, fourthly, not only in opinion, but likewise in some point of practice. He may not approve of that manner of worshipping God which is practised in our congregation; and may judge that to be more profitable for his soul which took its rise from Calvin or Martin Luther. He may have many objections to that Liturgy which we approve of beyond all others, many doubts concerning that form of church government which we esteem both apostolical and scriptural. Perhaps he may go farther from us yet he

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of Paul, who asked for absolute freedom from the Jewish law for the Gentile converts, agitated the early Church right up to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Still, it is hardly correct to say that the Apostles were never agreed on this point. At first there was a difference of opinion; but, in spite of Peter's temporary weakness at Antioch, we may assume that the Apostles did as a body accept the findings of the Council of Jerusalem.

The Antinomians and the Mora-

vians believed that the moral law had no authority over the believer. The Calvinists held predestination, irresistible grace, and final perseverance.

4. The Presbyterians and Independents objected to the use of a liturgical form of service, and to the episcopal type of Church government. The Quakers rejected the Sacraments altogether. The Anabaptists insisted on adult baptism only, and that by immersion.

may, from a principle of conscience, refrain from several of those which we believe to be the ordinances of Christ. Or, if we both agree that they are ordained of God, there may still remain a difference between us, either as to the manner of administering those ordinances, or the persons to whom they should be administered. Now the unavoidable consequence of any of these differences will be, that he who thus differs from us must separate himself, with regard to those points, from our society. In this respect, therefore, 'he followeth not us': he is not (as we phrase it) 'of our Church.'

5. But in a far stronger sense 'he followeth not us,' who is not only of a different Church, but of such a Church as we account to be in many respects anti-scriptural and anti-Christian,—a Church which we believe to be utterly false and erroneous in her doctrines, as well as very dangerously wrong in her practice, guilty of gross superstition as well as idolatry,—a Church that has added many articles to the faith which was once delivered to the saints; that has dropped one whole commandment of God, and made void several of the rest by her traditions, and that, pretending the highest veneration

5. On July 18, 1749, when he was in Dublin, Wesley wrote and published his *Letter to a Roman Catholic*, which breathes the very spirit of this sermon. He enumerates the essential points on which Protestants and Romanists are agreed, and pleads that on this basis they should work together in brotherly love and sympathy. But he came to see later the hopelessness of expecting any fraternal feeling or co-operation from the Romanists; and when in 1779 the Government brought forward the Act for the removal of Catholic disabilities, he opposed it vigorously, and asserted that no government not Roman Catholic ought to tolerate men of the Roman Catholic persuasion, not on doctrinal grounds, but because of the decree of the Council of Constance that 'no faith is to be kept with heretics,'

which made it impossible to trust any security which a Romanist might give for his allegiance. He also published a tract, *Popery Calmly Considered*, in which he pointed out the errors of Romish doctrine; such as the supremacy of the Pope, the placing of tradition on a level with the Scriptures, the prohibition of the reading of the Scriptures by the people, confession, the merit of good works, indulgences, purgatory, the use of Latin in the service, the worship of the Virgin Mary, angels, and saints, the use of images and pictures, the addition of five sacraments, transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper, administration of it in one kind to the laity, the worship of the Host, penance and absolution. He admits that 'many members of that Church have been holy men, and that many are now so'; but

for, and strictest conformity to, the ancient Church, has nevertheless brought in numberless innovations, without any warrant either from antiquity or Scripture. Now, most certainly, 'he followeth not us,' who stands at so great a distance from us.

6. And yet there may be a still wider difference than this. He who differs from us in judgement or practice, may possibly stand at a greater distance from us in affection than in judgement. And this indeed is a very natural and a very common effect of the other. The differences which begin in points of opinion seldom terminate there. They generally spread into the affections, and then separate chief friends. Nor are any animosities so deep and irreconcilable as those that spring from disagreement in religion. For this cause the bitterest enemies of a man are those of his own household. For this the father rises against his own children, and the children against the father, and perhaps persecute each other even to the death, thinking all the time they are doing God service. It is therefore nothing more than we may expect, if those who differ from us, either in religious opinions or practice, soon contract a sharpness, yea, bitterness towards us, if they are more and more prejudiced against us, till they conceive as ill an opinion of our persons as of our principles. An almost necessary consequence of this will be, they will speak in the same manner as they think of us. They will set themselves in opposition to us, and, as far as they are able, hinder our work, seeing it does not appear to them to be the work of God, but either of man or of the devil. He that thinks, speaks, and acts in such a manner as this, in the highest sense, 'followeth not us.'

7. I do not indeed conceive, that the person of whom the Apostle speaks in the text (although we have no particular account of him, either in the context, or in any other part of

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he maintains that their peculiar doctrine has a tendency to undermine holiness.

The omitted commandment is of course the second. It is not omitted

in the Douay Bible, but is explained away in a long note. But it is actually omitted in the *Child's Catechism* (1678).

holy writ) went so far as this. We have no ground to suppose that there was any material difference between him and the Apostles, much less that he had any prejudice either against them or their Master. It seems we may gather thus much from our Lord's own words, which immediately follow the text: 'There is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me.' But I purposely put the case in the strongest light, adding all the circumstances which can well be conceived; that, being forewarned of the temptation in its full strength, we may in no case yield to it, and fight against God.

III. 1. Suppose, then, a man have no intercourse with us, suppose he be not of our party, suppose he separate from our Church, yea, and widely differ from us, both in judgement, practice, and affection; yet if we see even this man 'casting out devils,' Jesus saith, 'Forbid him not.' This important direction of our Lord I am, in the third place, to explain.

2. If we see this man casting out devils: But it is well if, in such a case, we would believe even what we saw with our eyes, if we did not give the lie to our own senses. He must be little acquainted with human nature who does not immediately perceive how extremely unready we should be to believe that any man does cast out devils who 'followeth not us' in all or most of the senses above recited: I had almost said, in any of them; seeing we may easily learn even from what passes in our own breasts, how unwilling men are to allow anything good in those who do not in all things agree with themselves.

3. 'But what is a sufficient, reasonable proof, that a man does (in the sense above) cast out devils?' The answer is easy. Is there full proof, (1) That a person before us was a gross, open sinner? (2) That he is not so now? that he has broke off his sins, and lives a Christian life? And (3) That this change was wrought by his hearing this man preach? If these three points be plain and undeniable, then you have sufficient, reasonable proof, such as you cannot resist without wilful sin, that this man casts out devils.

4. Then 'forbid him not.' Beware how you attempt to hinder him, either by your authority, or arguments, or persuasions. Do not in any wise strive to prevent his using all the power which God has given him. If you have *authority* with him, do not use that authority to stop the work of God. Do not furnish him with *reasons* why he ought not any more to speak in the name of Jesus. Satan will not fail to supply him with these, if you do not second him therein. *Persuade* him not to depart from the work. If he should give place to the devil and you, many souls might perish in their iniquity, but their blood would God require at *your* hands.

5. 'But what, if he be only a layman, who casts out devils ! Ought I not to forbid him then ?'

Is the fact allowed ? Is there reasonable proof that this man has or does cast out devils ? If there is, forbid him not ,

III. 5. In his *Journal*, September 9, 1790, Wesley refers to Joseph Humphreys as 'the first lay preacher that assisted me in England in the year 1738.' But Humphreys was a Moravian minister, and as Archbishop Potter had declared that very year that the Moravian Brethren were an apostolical and episcopal Church, not sustaining any doctrines repugnant to the Church of England, he was not exactly a lay preacher. The first Methodist lay preacher was John Cennick, who filled the place of a preacher who had failed to keep an appointment at Kingswood in April 1739. But it was through Thomas Maxfield, one of his Bristol converts, that Wesley was led to sanction definitely the institution of lay preaching in Methodism. In the *Large Minutes* he says that 'a young man, Thomas Maxfield, and then another, Thomas Richards, and a little after a third, Thomas Westell, offered to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct.' This was about the end of 1739 or the beginning of 1740. On

leaving London, he appointed Maxfield to take charge of the Society in his absence, and to expound the Scriptures to them. Insensibly Maxfield went on from expounding to actual preaching ; and Wesley hurried back from Bristol to put a stop to this irregularity. But his mother had heard Maxfield, and warned her son, 'Take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him also yourself.' He did so, and was convinced, and withdrew his opposition. In 1745 he 'published his reasons to all the world' (par. 10 below) in his *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Part III, iii. 9. His arguments there are that the Scribes who preached among the Jews were not priests ; that neither our Lord nor His Apostles were priests, and yet were freely allowed to preach in the synagogues ; that in Acts viii. those that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the Word,

no, not at the peril of your soul. Shall not God work by whom He will work? No man can do these works unless God is with him, unless God hath sent him for this very thing. But if God hath sent him, will you call him back? Will you forbid him to go?

6. 'But I do not know that he is sent of God.' 'Now herein is a marvellous thing' (may any of the seals of his mission say, any whom he hath brought from Satan to God), 'that ye know not whence this man is, and, behold, he hath opened mine eyes! If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.' If you doubt the fact, send for the parents of the man send for his brethren, friends, acquaintance. But if you cannot doubt this, if you must needs acknowledge 'that a notable miracle hath been wrought', then with what conscience, with what face, can you charge him whom God hath sent, 'not to speak any more in His name'?

7. I allow, that it is highly expedient, whoever preaches in His name should have an outward as well as an inward call, but that it is *absolutely necessary*, I deny.

'Nay, is not the Scripture express? "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron"' (Heb. v. 4).

Numberless times has this text been quoted on the occasion, as containing the very strength of the cause, but surely never was so unhappy a quotation. For, first, Aaron was not called to preach at all: he was called 'to offer gifts and sacrifice for sin.' That was his peculiar employment.

and there is no suggestion that they were ordained; that John Calvin was never ordained; that in all the Protestant Churches in Germany, Sweden, and Holland, candidates for the ministry have to preach for a year before they are ordained, even as deacons; that laymen in the Church of England read the lessons, and even the whole service in many cases; that in Oxford every Bachelor of Arts, lay or cleric, has to read three public lectures in moral philosophy, which is practically

preaching; that a man can be a Doctor of Divinity there though he was never ordained. But his strongest argument is the necessity of the case, owing to the insufficiency of the clergy; and the undoubted blessing of God upon these lay helpers of his.

7. The 'outward call' means the official sanction of the Church by ordination.

Wesley's interpretation of the passage in Heb. v. 4 is unanswerable; and he could have made it

Secondly, these men do not offer sacrifice at all, but only preach; which Aaron did not. Therefore it is not possible to find one text in all the Bible which is more wide of the point than this.

8. 'But what was the practice of the apostolic age?' You may easily see in the Acts of the Apostles. In the eighth chapter we read, 'There was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem, and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the Apostles' (verse 1). 'Therefore they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word' (verse 4). Now, were all these outwardly called to preach? No man in his senses can think so. Here, then, is an undeniable proof, what was the practice of the apostolic age. Here you see not one, but a multitude of lay preachers, men that were only sent of God.

9. Indeed, so far is the practice of the apostolic age from inclining us to think it was *unlawful* for a man to preach before he was ordained, that we have reason to think it was

stronger still if he had recognized that the minister in the Christian Church is in no sense a priest, but a presbyter or elder; and that he corresponds not to the priest, but to the prophet, of the Old Testament. By derivation 'priest' comes through 'prester' from 'presbyter,' an elder; but unfortunately it was used in the Old Testament as the translation of *lepeús*, a sacrificing priest; a word never used in the New Testament of a minister, but of every member of the Church; all Christians are priests to offer spiritual sacrifices. 'Priest' being thus misinterpreted, it was necessary that the priest should have somewhat to offer; and so the Lord's Supper was perverted into a sacrifice offered by the priest. Wesley never quite realized this; he held to the end that only an ordained priest could administer the Sacrament; though he so far

altered his original view as to hold that episcopal ordination was not necessary, ordination by a presbyter being valid; and so he ordained some of his helpers for the full ministry, including the administration of the Sacrament, both for America and for Scotland. But it was not until after his death that the Conference took the responsibility of permitting all its ministers to administer the Lord's Supper in England. A further step has since been taken by giving authority to the President of Conference to allow probationers to administer the Sacrament, where it is desirable; and in Australia, home missionaries or 'any other person of good character and standing' may receive such permission, renewable from year to year. So the last relic of the Romish conception of the Lord's Supper has disappeared from Methodism.

then accounted *necessary*. Certainly the practice and the direction of the Apostle Paul was, to *prove* a man before he was ordained at all. 'Let these' (the deacons), says he, 'first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon' (1 Tim. iii. 10). *Proved*, how? By setting them to construe a sentence of Greek, and asking them a few commonplace questions? O amazing proof of a minister of Christ! Nay; but by making a clear, open trial (as is still done by most of the Protestant Churches of Europe), not only whether their lives be holy and unblameable, but whether they have such gifts as are absolutely and indispensably necessary in order to edify the Church of Christ.

10. But what if a man has these, and has brought sinners to repentance, and yet the Bishop will not ordain him? Then the Bishop does forbid him to cast out devils. But I dare not forbid him; I have published my reasons to all the world. Yet it is still insisted, I ought to do it. You who insist upon it answer those reasons. I know not that any have done this yet, or even made an attempt of doing it. Only some have spoken of them as very weak and trifling:

10. In *A Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, Part III, dated 'London, December 18, 1745' (*Works*, viii. 220) Wesley had said, 'I am bold to affirm that these unlettered men have help from God for that great work—the saving souls from death; seeing He hath enabled, and doth enable them still, to "turn many to righteousness."' He refers to the way in which these lay preachers had been raised up when the opponents' thought they had 'locked up every passage whereby any help could come to two or three preachers, weak in body as well as soul, who they might reasonably believe would, humanly speaking, wear themselves out in a short time.' He adds: 'We had no more foresight of this than you: nay, we had the deepest prejudices against it; until we could not but own that God gave

"wisdom from above" to these unlearned and ignorant men, so that the work of the Lord prospered in their hand, and sinners were daily converted to God.'

He points out that 'in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love), are able to do.'

They were laymen, but, he asks, 'Were not most of those whom it pleased God to employ in promoting the Reformation abroad, laymen also? Could that great work have been promoted at all in many places, if laymen had not preached?'

and this was prudent enough ; for it is far easier to despise, at least seem to despise, an argument, than to answer it. Yet till this is done I must say, when I have reasonable proof that any man does cast out devils, whatever others do, I dare not forbid him, lest I be found even to fight against God.

11. And whosoever thou art that fearest God, ‘ forbid him not,’ either directly or indirectly. There are many ways of doing this. You indirectly forbid him, if you either wholly deny, or despise and make little account of, the work which God has wrought by his hands. You indirectly forbid him, when you discourage him in his work, by drawing him into disputes concerning it, by raising objections against it, or frightening him with consequences which very possibly will never be. You forbid him when you show any unkindness toward him either in language or behaviour ; and much more when you speak of him to others either in an unkind or a contemptuous manner , when you endeavour to represent him to any, either in an odious or a despicable light. You are forbidding him all the time you are speaking evil of him, or making no account of his labours. O forbid him not in any of these ways ; nor by forbidding others to hear him,—by discouraging sinners from hearing that word which is able to save their souls !

12. Yea, if you would observe our Lord’s direction in its full meaning and extent, then remember His word ‘ He that is not for us is against us ; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth ’ : he that gathereth not men into the kingdom of God, assuredly scatters them from it. For there can be no neuter in this war. Every one is either on God’s side, or on Satan’s. Are you on God’s side ? Then you will not only not forbid any man that casts out devils, but you will labour, to the uttermost of your power, to forward him in the work. You will readily acknowledge the work of God, and confess the greatness of it. You will remove all difficulties and objections, as far as may be, out of his way. You will strengthen his hands by speaking honourably of him before all men, and avowing the things which you have seen and heard. You will encourage others to attend upon his

word, to hear him whom God hath sent. And you will omit no actual proof of tender love, which God gives you an opportunity of showing him.

IV 1. If we willingly fail in any of these points, if we either directly or indirectly forbid him, 'because he followeth not us,' then we are bigots. This is the inference I draw from what has been said. But the term 'bigotry,' I fear, as frequently as it is used, is almost as little understood as 'enthusiasm.' It is too strong an attachment to, or fondness for, our own party, opinion, church, and religion. Therefore he is a bigot who is so fond of any of these, so strongly attached to them, as to forbid any who casts out devils because he differs from himself in any or all these particulars.

2. Do *you* beware of this. Take care (1) That you do not convict yourself of bigotry, by your unreadiness to believe that any man does cast out devils, who differs from you. And if you are clear thus far, if you acknowledge the fact, then examine yourself, (2) Am I not convicted of bigotry in this, in forbidding him directly or indirectly? Do I not directly forbid him on this ground, because he is not of my party, because he does not fall in with my opinions, or because he does not worship God according to that scheme of religion which I have received from my fathers?

3. Examine yourself, Do I not indirectly at least forbid him, on any of these grounds? Am I not sorry that God should thus own and bless a man that holds such erroneous opinions? Do I not discourage him, because he is not of my Church, by disputing with him concerning it, by raising objections, and by perplexing his mind with distant consequences? Do I show no anger, contempt, or unkindness of any sort, either in my words or actions? Do I not mention behind his back, his (real or supposed) faults—his defects or infirmities? Do not I hinder sinners from hearing his word? If you do any of these things, you are a bigot to this day.

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IV. 1. The derivation of the word 'bigotry' is an unsolved puzzle; the *N. E. Dict.* defines it as 'ob-

stinate and unenlightened attachment to a particular creed, opinion, system, or party.'

4. 'Search me, O Lord, and prove me. Try out my reins and my heart! Look well if there be any way of' bigotry 'in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.' In order to examine ourselves thoroughly, let the case be proposed in the strongest manner. What, if I were to see a Papist, an Arian, a Socinian, casting out devils? If I did, I could not forbid even him, without convicting myself of bigotry. Yea, if it could be supposed that I should see a Jew, a Deist, or a Turk, doing the same, were I to forbid him either directly or indirectly, I should be no better than a bigot still.

5. O stand clear of this! But be not content with not forbidding any that casts out devils. It is well to go thus far; but do not stop here. If you will avoid all bigotry, go on. In every instance of this kind, whatever the instrument be, acknowledge the finger of God. And not only acknowledge, but rejoice in His work, and praise His name with thanksgiving. Encourage whomsoever God is pleased to employ, to give himself wholly up thereto. Speak well of him wheresoever you are, defend his character and his mission. Enlarge, as far as you can, his sphere of action; show him all kindness in word and deed, and cease not to cry to God in his behalf, that he may save both himself and them that hear him.

6. I need add but one caution: Think not the bigotry of another is any excuse for your own. It is not impossible, that one who casts out devils himself, may yet forbid you so to do. You may observe, this is the very case mentioned in the text. The Apostles forbade another to do what they

4. After such a declaration, how can any Methodist be intolerant?

6. This was the hardest part of Wesley's lot, that so many really good men were opposed to his methods and doctrine; it is the height of Christian charity to exercise it towards those who will not extend it to us.

'A great man.' Wesley's *Life of Luther* in the first volume of the *Arminian Magazine* makes no refer-

ence to this saying; but I have discovered the author to be John Calvin. In a letter from Charles Wesley to Whitefield dated September 1, 1740 (No. 1 in Jackson's edition of the *Journals and Letters*), he says, 'I would adopt that noble saying of Calvin, "Etsi me Lutherus centum diabolos nuncuperavit, ego illum nihilominus agnoscam at diligam ut ministrum et angelum Dei."'

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did themselves. But beware of retorting. It is not your part to return evil for evil. Another's not observing the direction of our Lord, is no reason why you should neglect it. Nay, but let him have all the bigotry to himself. If he forbid *you*, do not you forbid *him*. Rather labour, and watch, and pray the more, to confirm your love toward him. If he speak all manner of evil of *you*, speak all manner of good (that is true) of *him*. Imitate herein that glorious saying of a great man (O that he had always breathed the same spirit !), ' Let Luther call me a hundred devils ; I will still reverence him as a messenger of God.'

## SERMON XXXIV

### CATHOLIC SPIRIT

THIS sermon was first published in Vol. III of the Sermons, 1750. Wesley preached it at Newcastle on September 8, 1749, and at Bristol on November 3 of the same year; he doubtless revised it for the press in December at Stoke Newington along with the rest; see introduction to Sermon XXIX. It was republished separately by H. Cock in 1755, with a hymn appended by Charles Wesley on Catholic Love. This hymn was greatly beloved by Dean Stanley.

#### I

Weary of all this wordy strife,  
These notions, forms, and modes, and names,  
To Thee, the Way, the Truth, the Life,  
Whose love my simple heart inflames,  
Divinely taught, at last I fly  
With Thee and Thine to live and die.

#### II

Forth from the midst of *Babel* brought,  
Parties and sects I cast behind;  
Inlarged my heart, and free my thought,  
Where'er the latent truth I find,  
The latent truth with joy to own,  
And bow to Jesus' name alone.

#### III

Redeem'd by Thine almighty grace,  
I taste my glorious liberty,  
With open arms the world embrace,  
But *cleave* to those who cleave to Thee;  
But only in Thy saints *delight*,  
Who walk with God in purest white.

## IV

One with the little flock I rest,  
 The members sound who hold the Head ;  
 The chosen few, with pardon blest,  
 And by th' anointing Spirit led  
 Into the mind that was in Thee,  
 Into the depths of Deity.

## V

My brethren, friends, and kinsmen these,  
 Who do my heavenly Father's will,  
 Who *aim* at perfect holiness,  
 And all Thy counsels to fulfil,  
 Athirst to be whate'er Thou art,  
 And love their God with all their heart.

## VI

For these, howe'er in flesh disjoin'd,  
 Where'er dispersed o'er earth abroad,  
 Unfeigned, unbounded love I find,  
 And constant as the life of God ;  
 Fountain of life, from thence it sprung,  
 As pure, as even, and as strong.

## VII

Join'd to the hidden church unknown  
 In this sure bond of perfectness,  
 Obscurely safe, I dwell alone,  
 And glory in th' uniting grace,  
 To me, to each believer given,  
 To all Thy saints in earth and heaven.

C. W.

The text is purely a motto ; Jehu is not only discarded, like ' poor Agrippa ' in the ' Almost Christian,' but is stigmatized as ' a mixed character ' ; and Wesley expressly states (par. 12) that in examining the meaning of the question, he does not try to discover what Jehu implied in it, but what a follower of Christ should understand thereby. When Wesley sent a copy of the sermon to the Rev. Mr. Clark, of Hollymount, that gentleman's criticism, ' Your propositions and observations have no more foundation in the text than in the first chapter of Genesis,' was entirely justified. Jehu had waded through slaughter to a throne ; he had murdered two kings and one hundred and twelve princes, and had given Queen Jezebel to the dogs to eat ; he was now on his way to destroy by a ruthless massacre the priests

and worshippers of Baal, not for religious but for political reasons, for they would probably have resisted the murderer of their patrons, Ahab and Jezebel. On the road he met the stern fanatic Jehonadab, who, in his passionate revolt against the prevailing Baal-worship and luxury of the times, had led his Kenites into the solitudes of the wilderness, and bound them with a vow to live always in tents away from a corrupt civilization, and to abstain altogether from wine and strong drink. Jehu recognized in him a valuable ally in his crusade, though his motive was altogether different; and asking, 'Are you with me in this business?' on receiving his vehement answer, 'I am, I am!' he dragged him up into his own chariot. (Not the last time that a crafty politician has given countenance to his proceedings by gaining the alliance of a fanatical religionist.) All this has little enough to do with the Catholic Spirit; but Wesley did not mind. The question and answer divorced from its context suited his purpose, and so he took it for the text of this, one of the noblest sermons he ever preached.

It was on the broad, catholic lines here drawn that he had founded his Societies. The only condition laid down for admission to them was that the candidate should have 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from his sins.' In the *Plain Account* (1748) he says, 'Orthodoxy, or right opinions, is, at best, but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part of it at all'; and forty years later, in the sermon on the Ministerial Office (No. CXV) he concludes: 'We, by the grace of God, hold on our way; being ourselves still members of the Church of England, as we were from the beginning, but receiving all that love God in every Church, as our brother, and sister, and mother. And in order to their union with us, we require no unity in opinions, or in modes of worship, but barely that they "fear God and work righteousness" as was observed. Now, this is utterly a new thing, unheard of in any other Christian community. In what Church or congregation beside, throughout the Christian world, can members be admitted upon these terms, without any other conditions? Point any such out, whoever can; I know none in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America! This is the glory of the Methodists, and of them alone! They are themselves no particular sect or party; but they receive those, of all parties, who endeavour "to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God." See also the *Journal*, May 18, 1788, 'I do not know any other religious society . . . wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed, since the age of the Apostles. Here is our glorying; and a glorying peculiar to us. What society shares it with us?'

*And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him : and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart ? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand.—2 KINGS x. 15.*

1. IT is allowed even by those who do not pay this great debt, that love is due to all mankind, the royal law, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,' carrying its own evidence to all that hear it : and that, not according to the miserable construction put upon it by the zealots of old times, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour,' thy relation, acquaintance, friend, 'and hate thine enemy' : not so, 'I say unto you,' saith our Lord, 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children,' may appear so to all mankind, 'of your Father which is in heaven, who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.'

2. But it is sure, there is a peculiar love which we owe to those that love God. So David 'All my delight is upon the saints that are in the earth, and upon such as excel in virtue.' And so a greater than he : 'A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another' (John xiii. 34, 35). This is that love on which the Apostle John so frequently and strongly insists 'This,' saith he, 'is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another' (1 John iii. 11). 'Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us : and we ought,' if love should call us thereto, 'to lay down our lives for the brethren' (verse 16). And again : 'Beloved, let us love one another : for love

Par. 1. 'The royal law' ; so it is called by St. James (ii. 8). The phrase occurs in an inscription of the time of Trajan, meaning a law promulgated by the Emperor ; and in the same way we find roads made by the Emperor called 'royal roads.' Hence the meaning may be 'the law

promulgated by the King,' 'the imperial law.' But more probably it means the supreme law, which controls all the rest.

2. 'All my delight,' &c. The quotation is from Ps. xvi. 3, Prayer-Book version.

The passage 1 John iii. 16 should

is of God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love' (iv. 7, 8). 'Not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another' (verses 10, 11).

3. All men approve of this, but do all men practise it? Daily experience shows the contrary. Where are even the Christians who 'love one another as He hath given us commandment'? How many hindrances lie in the way! The two grand, general hindrances are, first, that they cannot all think alike; and, in consequence of this, secondly, they cannot all walk alike; but in several smaller points their practice must differ in proportion to the difference of their sentiments.

4. But although a difference in opinions or modes of worship may prevent an entire external union, yet need it prevent our union in affection? Though we cannot think alike, may we not love alike? May we not be of one heart, though we are not of one opinion? Without all doubt, we may. Herein all the children of God may unite, notwithstanding these smaller differences. These remaining as they are, they may forward one another in love and in good works.

5. Surely in this respect the example of Jehu himself, as mixed a character as he was of, is well worthy both the attention and imitation of every serious Christian. 'And when he was departed thence, he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab coming to meet him: and he saluted him, and said to him, Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart? And Jehonadab answered, It is. If it be, give me thine hand.'

The text naturally divides itself into two parts.—First, a question proposed by Jehu to Jehonadab: 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?' Secondly, an offer made on Jehonadab's answering, 'It is' 'If it be, give me thine hand.'

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be, as Wesley points out in the *Notes on N. T.*, 'hereby we know love'; there is no good authority

for the addition 'of God.' It is love in its broadest aspect that we learn from the death of Christ.

I. 1. And, first, let us consider the question proposed by Jehu to Jehonadab, 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?'

The very first thing we may observe in these words, is, that here is no inquiry concerning Jehonadab's opinions. And yet it is certain, he held some which were very uncommon, indeed quite peculiar to himself, and some which had a close influence upon his practice, on which, likewise, he laid so great a stress, as to entail them upon his children's children, to their latest posterity. This is evident from the account given by Jeremiah, many years after his death 'I took Jaazaniah and his brethren, and all his sons, and the whole house of the Rechabites, . . . and set before them pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine: for Jonadab,' or Jehonadab, 'the son of Rechab, our father' (it would be less ambiguous, if the words were placed thus 'Jehonadab *our father, the son of Rechab*', out of love and reverence to whom, he probably desired his descendants might be called by his name), 'commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither ye, nor your sons for ever. Neither shall ye build house, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyard, nor have any but all your days ye shall dwell in tents. . . . And we have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us' (Jer. xxxv. 3-10).

2. And yet Jehu (although it seems to have been his manner, both in things secular and religious, to *drive furiously*) does not concern himself at all with any of these things, but lets Jehonadab abound in his own sense. And neither of them appears to have given the other the least disturbance touching the opinions which he maintained.

3. It is very possible, that many good men now also may entertain peculiar opinions, and some of them may be as singular herein as even Jehonadab was. And it is certain,

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I. 1. 'Jonadab our father, the son of Rechab,' is an improvement on the A.V. Jonadab, not Rechab, was the author of this prohibition.

2. 'Abound in his own sense':

a common old phrase, derived from the late Latin *abundare in suo sensu*, meaning to have the full liberty of his opinions.

3. 'Several men will be of several

so long as we know but *in part*, that all men will not see all things alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of the present weakness and shortness of human understanding, that several men will be of several minds in religion as well as in common life. So it has been from the beginning of the world, and so it will be 'till the restitution of all things.'

4. Nay, farther: although every man necessarily believes that every particular opinion which he holds is true (for to believe any opinion is not true, is the same thing as not to hold it); yet can no man be assured that all his own opinions, taken together, are true. Nay, every thinking man is assured they are not; seeing *humanum est errare et nescire*: 'to be ignorant of many things, and to mistake in some, is the necessary condition of humanity.' This, therefore, he is sensible, is his own case. He knows, in the general, that he himself is mistaken, although in what particulars he mistakes, he does not, perhaps he cannot, know.

5. I say, 'perhaps he cannot know'; for who can tell how far invincible ignorance may extend? or (that comes to the same thing) invincible prejudice?—which is often so fixed in tender minds, that it is afterwards impossible to tear up what has taken so deep a root. And who can say, unless he knew every circumstance attending it, how far any mistake is culpable? seeing all guilt must suppose some concurrence of the will, of which He only can judge who searcheth the heart.

6. Every wise man, therefore, will allow others the same

minds': a reminiscence of Terence, *Phormio* ii. 4. 14, 'Quot homines, tot sententiae.'

4. This is a curious bit of logic: a man must believe that *each* of his particular opinions is true, and yet may not be assured that *all* his opinions are true—a transparent fallacy. The fact is rather that we believe that some of our opinions are true, and that some are only probable; though, as probability is the guide of life, we have to act on them.

'Humanum est errare': a common Latin proverb, popularized in English by Pope's line in the *Essay on Criticism*, 525: 'To err is human; to forgive, divine.'

5. 'Invincible ignorance': *ignorantia invincibilis*: a scholastic phrase, used by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, lxxvi. 2, for ignorance, the means for overcoming which are not possessed by the person affected, who is consequently not to be blamed.

liberty of thinking which he desires they should allow him ; and will no more insist on their embracing his opinions, than he would have them to insist on his embracing theirs. He bears with those who differ from him, and only asks him with whom he desires to unite in love that single question, ' Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart ? '

7. We may, secondly, observe, that here is no inquiry made concerning Jehonadab's mode of worship , although it is highly probable there was, in this respect also, a very wide difference between them. For we may well believe Jehonadab, as well as all his posterity, worshipped God at Jerusalem : whereas Jehu did not : he had more regard to state-policy than religion. And, therefore, although he slew the worshippers of Baal, and ' destroyed Baal out of Israel ' ; yet from the convenient sin of Jeroboam, the worship of ' the golden calves,' he ' departed not ' (2 Kings x. 29).

8. But even among men of an upright heart, men who desire to ' have a conscience void of offence,' it must needs be, that, as long as there are various opinions, there will be various ways of worshipping God , seeing a variety of opinions necessarily implies a variety of practice. And as, in all ages, men have differed in nothing more than in their opinions concerning the Supreme Being, so in nothing have they more differed from each other, than in the manner of worshipping Him. Had this been only in the heathen world, it would not have been at all surprising : for we know, these ' by ' their ' wisdom knew not God ' ; nor, therefore, could they know how to worship Him. But is it not strange, that even in the Christian world, although they all agree in the general, ' God is a Spirit , and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth ' ; yet the particular modes of worshipping God are almost as various as among the Heathens ?

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7. The Rechabites were a tribe of Kenites ; and though the conduct of Jonadab on this occasion, and the fact that all the names of members of the tribe that are known to us contain the name Jah in their com-

position, seem to prove that they were worshippers of Jehovah, yet they were not Jews, and there is no likelihood that they worshipped in the temple at Jerusalem. This only adds force to Wesley's contention.

9. And how shall we choose among so much variety? No man can choose for, or prescribe to, another. But every one must follow the dictates of his own conscience, in simplicity and godly sincerity. He must be fully persuaded in his own mind; and then act according to the best light he has. Nor has any creature power to constrain another to walk by his own rule. God has given no right to any of the children of men thus to lord it over the conscience of his brethren; but every man must judge for himself, as every man must give an account of himself to God.

10. Although, therefore, every follower of Christ is obliged, by the very nature of the Christian institution, to be a member of some particular congregation or other, some Church, as it

10. Our Lord is only recorded to have used the word 'ecclesia' (church) on two occasions; and both are related in St. Matthew's Gospel: the first when He declared that His Church should be built on the rock of the Apostle's great confession, 'Thou art the Christ'; the second when He gave directions to His disciples in case of a stubborn refusal on the part of a brother to be reconciled, to tell it to the Church. Immediately upon this follows what may be taken to be His definition of a church: 'Wherever two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them.' There is no definite command that every believer should join a church; that is assumed, as Wesley says, from 'the very nature of the Christian institution.' It is impossible that a man should discharge the duties laid upon him by his profession of Christianity without joining with others like-minded. Even if he could continue steadfast in apostolic doctrine by himself, he could not engage in the fellowship, or the breaking of bread, or the prayers (i.e. public services) without companions. In the Epistles, Chris-

tians are called by three titles: saints, brethren, and members of the body of Christ; the two last imply union with some company of others. Moreover, one of the chief duties of Christians is to spread the knowledge of the gospel; and successful missionary, as well as effective philanthropic, work cannot be carried out by isolated individuals. But no law is laid down as to how far and under what conditions the automatically formed companies of believers are to unite with one another for purposes of government or co-operation; no particular form of Church government is prescribed; and no order for public services is set forth. Each unitary congregation has full liberty in all these respects. Hence it follows that no union of congregations, whether based on territorial limits, or similar practices, or a common creed, can force any other to join with it. Still less is any one congregation or union of congregations entitled to use force, either physical or legal or social, to compel an individual believer to become one of them. The gradual evolution in the primitive churches of organization and methods

is usually termed (which implies a particular manner of worshipping God ; for 'two cannot walk together unless they be agreed') ; yet none can be obliged by any power on earth but that of his own conscience, to prefer this or that congregation to another, this or that particular manner of worship. I know it is commonly supposed that the place of our birth fixes the Church to which we ought to belong ; that one, for instance, who is born in England, ought to be a member of that which is styled the Church of England ; and consequently, to worship God in the particular manner which is prescribed by that Church. I was once a zealous maintainer of this ; but I find many reasons to abate of this zeal. I fear it is attended with such difficulties as no reasonable man can get over. Not the least of which is, that if this rule had took place, there could have been no Reformation from Popery ; seeing it entirely destroys the right of private judgement, on which that whole Reformation stands.

II. I dare not, therefore, presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical : but my belief is no rule for another. I ask not,

was guided by the force of circumstances, under the direction of the Holy Spirit ; and the history of the development of Methodism is in many respects a repetition of it, as is most interestingly shown in a work by the late Rev. William A. Quick, who was the Father of our Church in Australia for some years, and passed to his reward in 1915 in the ninety-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-fifth of his ministry ; it is entitled *Methodism : A Parallel*, and deserves and will repay careful study.

Wesley began life as a zealous High Churchman ; and continued to be so, even after he had entered upon his evangelistic work in 1739. But on January 20, 1746, on his way from London to Bristol, he read Peter (afterwards Lord Chan-

cellor) King's *Account of the Primitive Church*. 'In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education,' he says, 'I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught ; but, if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent on all others.' His discovery on his journeys of many devout and godly Presbyterians, and Independents, and Quakers, opened his eyes to the existence of real piety outside the bounds of his own Church, and prepared him to receive King's teaching. It is remarkable that this book, so epoch-making for Wesley and his Societies, was written by Mr. King when he was only twenty-two years of age.

II. The Presbyterians sat whilst

therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church, of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government, and allow the same church officers, with me? Do you join in the same form of prayer wherein I worship God? I inquire not, Do you receive the supper of the Lord in the same posture and manner that I do? nor whether, in the administration of baptism, you agree with me in admitting sureties for the baptized, in the manner of administering it, or the age of those to whom it should be administered. Nay, I ask not of you (as clear as I am in my own mind), whether you allow baptism and the Lord's supper at all. Let all these things stand by: we will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient season; my only question at present is this, 'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?'

12. But what is properly implied in the question? I do not mean, What did Jehu imply therein? But, What should a follower of Christ understand thereby, when he proposes it to any of his brethren?

The first thing implied is this: Is thy heart right with God? Dost thou believe His being, and His perfections? His eternity, immensity, wisdom, power? His justice, mercy, and truth? Dost thou believe that He now 'upholdeth all things by the word of His power'? and that He governs even the most minute, even the most noxious, to His own glory, and

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they celebrated the Lord's Supper; the Anglicans knelt. The present practice in the Methodist Church is for the communicants to kneel at the rail round the Table; but where for any reason that is inconvenient, the sitting posture is adopted.

The ancient custom of having Godparents as sureties and sponsors for an infant in baptism was and is still retained in the Church of England; none of the other churches in England or Scotland, except the Romish, used it.

The Anabaptists, or Baptists as

they are now called, maintain that immersion is the only Scriptural and valid manner of baptism; and that it should only be administered to adults. The Anglican and Presbyterian and Independent Churches hold that the methods of immersion, affusion, and sprinkling are all valid; and that the infant children of members of the Church are proper subjects of baptism. This is the view taken by the modern Methodist Church. The Quakers denied the obligation of any Sacraments.

the good of them that love Him? Hast thou a divine evidence, a supernatural conviction, of the things of God? Dost thou 'walk by faith, not by sight'? looking not at temporal things, but things eternal?

13. Dost thou believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, 'God over all, blessed for ever'? Is He revealed in thy soul? Dost thou know Jesus Christ and Him crucified? Does He dwell in thee, and thou in Him? Is He formed in thy heart by faith? Having absolutely disclaimed all thy own works, thy own righteousness, hast thou 'submitted thyself unto the righteousness of God,' which is by faith in Christ Jesus? Art thou 'found in Him, not having thy own righteousness, but the righteousness which is by faith'? And art thou, through Him, 'fighting the good fight of faith, and laying hold of eternal life'?

14. Is thy faith *ἐνεργουμένη δι' ἀγάπης*—*filled with the energy of love*? Dost thou love God (I do not say 'above all things,' for it is both an unscriptural and an ambiguous expression, but) 'with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength'? Dost thou seek all thy happiness in Him alone? And dost thou find what thou seekest? Does thy soul continually 'magnify the Lord, and thy spirit rejoice in God thy Saviour'? Having learned 'in everything to give thanks,' dost thou find 'it is a joyful and a pleasant thing to be thankful'? Is God the centre of thy soul, the sum of all thy desires? Art thou accordingly laying up thy treasure in heaven, and counting all things else dung and dross? Hath the love of God cast the love of the world out of thy soul? Then thou art 'crucified to the world'; thou art dead to all below; and thy 'life is hid with Christ in God.'

15. Art thou employed in doing, 'not thy own will, but the will of Him that sent thee'—of Him that sent thee

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14. Rather 'exercising its energy through love'; the participle is middle, not passive.

The phrase 'to love God above all things' is objectionable, because it

implies that other things may be loved apart from God, so long as they are not loved as much as He is. It is better to say 'to love God in all things.'

down to sojourn here awhile, to spend a few days in a strange land, till, having finished the work He hath given thee to do, thou return to thy Father's house? Is it thy meat and drink 'to do the will of thy Father which is in heaven'? Is thine eye single in all things? always fixed on Him? always looking unto Jesus? Dost thou point at Him in whatsoever thou doest? in all thy labour, thy business, thy conversation? aiming only at the glory of God in all; 'whatsoever thou doest, either in word or deed, doing it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God, even the Father, through Him'?

16. Does the love of God constrain thee to serve Him with fear, to 'rejoice unto Him with reverence'? Art thou more afraid of displeasing God, than either of death or hell? Is nothing so terrible to thee as the thought of offending the eyes of His glory? Upon this ground, dost thou 'hate all evil ways,' every transgression of His holy and perfect law; and herein 'exercise thyself, to have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward man'?

17. Is thy heart right toward thy neighbour? Dost thou love, as thyself, all mankind, without exception? 'If you love those only that love you, what thank have ye?' Do you 'love your enemies'? Is your soul full of good-will, of tender affection, toward them? Do you love even the enemies of God, the unthankful and unholy? Do your bowels yearn over them? Could you 'wish yourself' temporally 'accursed' for their sake? And do you show this by 'blessing them that curse you, and praying for those that despitefully use you, and persecute you'?

18. Do you show your love by your works? While you have time, as you have opportunity, do you in fact 'do good to all men,' neighbours or strangers, friends or enemies, good or bad? Do you do them all the good you can, endeavouring to supply all their wants; assisting them both in body and soul, to the uttermost of your power?—If thou art thus

15. 'Point at Him,' i.e. direct thy thoughts to Him, have reference to Him.

16. 'Rejoice unto Him,' &c., Ps. ii. 11, Prayer-Book version.

18. 'If thou art but sincerely

minded, may every Christian say, yea, if thou art but sincerely desirous of it, and following on till thou attain, then 'thy heart is right, as my heart is with thy heart.'

II. 1. 'If it be, give me thy hand.' I do not mean, 'Be of my opinion.' You need not: I do not expect or desire it. Neither do I mean, 'I will be of your opinion.' I cannot it does not depend on my choice. I can no more think, than I can see or hear, as I will. Keep you your opinion, I mine, and that as steadily as ever. You need not even endeavour to come over to me, or bring me over to you. I do not desire you to dispute those points, or to hear or speak one word concerning them. Let all opinions alone on one side and the other: only 'give me thine hand.'

2. I do not mean, 'Embrace my modes of worship', or, 'I will embrace yours.' This also is a thing which does not depend either on your choice or mine. We must both act as each is fully persuaded in his own mind. Hold you fast that which you believe is most acceptable to God, and I will do the same. I believe the Episcopal form of church government to be scriptural and apostolical. If you think the Presbyterian or Independent is better, think so still, and act accordingly. I believe infants ought to be baptized; and that this may be done either by dipping or sprinkling. If you are otherwise persuaded, be so still, and follow your own persuasion. It appears to me, that forms of prayer are of excellent use, particularly in the great congregation. If you judge extemporary prayer to be of more use, act suitably to your own judgement. My sentiment is, that I ought not to forbid water, wherein persons may be baptized, and that I ought to eat bread and drink wine, as a memorial of my dying Master however, if you are not convinced of this, act according to the light you have. I have no desire to dispute with you one moment upon any of the preceding heads. Let all these smaller points stand aside. Let them never come into sight.

desirous of it'—an important qualification. If our catholic love is only to embrace those who have

attained the character above described, it will have but little scope for its exercise.

‘ If thine heart is as my heart,’ if thou lovest God and all mankind, I ask no more : ‘ give me thine hand.’

3. I mean, first, love me : and that not only as thou lovest all mankind , not only as thou lovest thine enemies, or the enemies of God, those that hate thee, that ‘ despitefully use thee, and persecute thee ’ , not only as a stranger, as one of whom thou knowest neither good nor evil,—I am not satisfied with this,—no ; ‘ if thine heart be right, as mine with thy heart,’ then love me with a very tender affection, as a friend that is closer than a brother ; as a brother in Christ, a fellow citizen of the New Jerusalem, a fellow soldier engaged in the same warfare, under the same Captain of our salvation. Love me as a companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus, and a joint heir of His glory.

4. Love me (but in a higher degree than thou dost the bulk of mankind) with the love that is *long-suffering and kind* , that is patient,—if I am ignorant or out of the way, bearing and not increasing my burden ; and is tender, soft, and compassionate still , that *envieth not*, if at any time it please God to prosper me in His work even more than thee. Love me with the love that is *not provoked*, either at my follies or infirmities ; or even at my acting (if it should sometimes so appear to thee) not according to the will of God. Love me so as to *think no evil* of me , to put away all jealousy and evil-surmising. Love me with the love that *covereth all things* , that never reveals either my faults or infirmities,—that *believeth all things* ; is always willing to think the best, to put the fairest construction on all my words and actions,—that *hopeth all things* , either that the thing related was never done , or not done with such circumstances as are related ; or, at least, that it was done with a good intention, or in a sudden stress of temptation. And hope to the end, that whatever is amiss will, by the grace of God, be corrected , and whatever is wanting, supplied, through the riches of His mercy in Christ Jesus.

5. I mean, secondly, commend me to God in all thy prayers ; wrestle with Him in my behalf, that He would

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II. 4. See the exposition of 1 Cor. xiii. in Sermon XVII. iii.

speedily correct what He sees amiss, and supply what is wanting in me. In thy nearest access to the throne of grace, beg of Him who is then very present with thee, that my heart may be more as thy heart, more right both toward God and toward man, that I may have a fuller conviction of things not seen, and a stronger view of the love of God in Christ Jesus, may more steadily walk by faith, not by sight; and more earnestly grasp eternal life. Pray that the love of God and of all mankind may be more largely poured into my heart; that I may be more fervent and active in doing the will of my Father which is in heaven, more zealous of good works, and more careful to abstain from all appearance of evil.

6. I mean, thirdly, provoke me to love and to good works. Second thy prayer, as thou hast opportunity, by speaking to me, in love, whatsoever thou believest to be for my soul's health. Quicken me in the work which God has given me to do, and instruct me how to do it more perfectly. Yea, 'smite me friendly, and reprove me,' whereinsoever I appear to thee to be doing rather my own will, than the will of Him that sent me. O speak and spare not, whatever thou believest may conduce, either to the amending my faults, the strengthening my weakness, the building me up in love, or the making me more fit, in any kind, for the Master's use.

7. I mean, lastly, love me not in word only, but in deed and in truth. So far as in conscience thou canst (retaining still thy own opinions, and thy own manner of worshipping God), join with me in the work of God; and let us go on hand in hand. And thus far, it is certain, thou mayest go. Speak honourably, wherever thou art, of the work of God, by whomsoever He works, and kindly of His messengers. And, if it be in thy power, not only sympathize with them when they are in any difficulty or distress, but give them a cheerful and effectual assistance, that they may glorify God on thy behalf.

8. Two things should be observed with regard to what

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5. 'Appearance of evil'; more correctly 'every kind of evil.'

has been spoken under this last head the one, that whatsoever love, whatsoever offices of love, whatsoever spiritual or temporal assistance, I claim from him whose heart is right, as my heart is with his, the same I am ready, by the grace of God, according to my measure, to give him the other, that I have not made this claim in behalf of myself only, but of all whose heart is right toward God and man, that we may all love one another as Christ hath loved us.

III. 1. One inference we may make from what has been said. We may learn from hence, what is a catholic spirit.

There is scarce any expression which has been more grossly misunderstood, and more dangerously misapplied, than this: but it will be easy for any who calmly consider the preceding observations, to correct any such misapprehensions of it, and to prevent any such misapplication.

For, from hence we may learn, first, that a catholic spirit is not *speculative* latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions: this is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being 'driven

III. 1. In the earliest Christian usage the Catholic Church meant the Church as a whole, in contradistinction to local and individual churches; then it came to mean the orthodox Church as opposed to heretical bodies; and the original Church as opposed to schismatics. When the Great Schism took place between the Eastern and Western Churches, the Western assumed the title 'Catholic' and the Eastern 'Orthodox.' Hence at the time of the Reformation the Roman Church retained the title Catholic as contrasted with the Protestant, Reformed, and Lutheran Churches. The Protestants, however, claimed to be still part of the Catholic or Universal Church, and in the early seventeenth century in England the older Church was distinguished as Roman Catholic; and this is still

its legal title throughout the British Empire. The Church of England always claimed to be part of the Catholic Church, and this position was prominent in the teaching of the leaders of the Oxford Movement of the mid-nineteenth century, the compound Anglo Catholic being coined as the distinguishing name for the Church of England. The other Protestant Churches, however, soon put in their claim to be regarded as parts of the Catholic Church; and the word has thus reverted to its original sense. The Catholic Church is the whole body of Christian people throughout the world, including all the various denominations into which they are divided. The phrase 'the catholic spirit' is thus the spirit which regards as fellow-Christians all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Baxter in 1658 speaks

to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine,' is a great curse, not a blessing, an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend, to true catholicism. A man of a truly catholic spirit has not now his religion to seek. He is fixed as the sun in his judgement concerning the main branches of Christian doctrine. It is true, he is always ready to hear and weigh whatsoever can be offered against his principles; but as this does not show any wavering in his own mind, so neither does it occasion any. He does not halt between two opinions, nor vainly endeavour to blend them into one. Observe this, you who know not what spirit ye are of: who call yourselves men of a catholic spirit, only because you are of a muddy understanding, because your mind is all in a mist; because you have no settled, consistent principles, but are for jumbling all opinions together. Be convinced, that you have quite missed your way; you know not where you are. You think you are got into the very spirit of Christ; when, in truth, you are nearer the spirit of Antichrist. Go, first, and learn the first elements of the gospel of Christ, and then shall you learn to be of a truly catholic spirit.

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of Cromwell as 'a man of a catholic spirit, desirous of the unity and peace of all the servants of Christ.' Dr. Watts in 1734 desires 'to see all the disciples of Christ grown up into such a catholic spirit as to be ready to worship God their common Father in the same assembly.' The Methodist Church admits the claim to catholicity of all branches of the Christian Church, and equally claims it for herself. It may be questioned whether such a mechanical union of all the branches of the Church as the Romanists have always aimed at is practical or desirable; but such a recognition of our common catholicity should be possible as would express itself in common participation in the Lord's Supper, interchange of pulpits, and co-operation in the various forms of Christian

activity, especially in philanthropic and missionary enterprises.

The word 'Latitudinarianism' came into use in England after the Restoration to describe the attitude of the divines of the Church of England who, whilst retaining their attachment to the Anglican form of Church government and worship, yet regarded them as non-essential to salvation. They were mostly Cambridge men. But the stricter Anglicans interpreted the word, as Wesley here does, to mean the view that all religions are equally good; and that it does not matter what a man believes or how he worships, nor indeed what sort of a life he leads. It is in this perverted sense that Wesley calls it 'the spawn of hell.'

2. From what has been said, we may learn, secondly, that a catholic spirit is not any kind of *practical* latitudinarianism. It is not indifference as to public worship, or as to the outward manner of performing it. This, likewise, would not be a blessing, but a curse. Far from being an help thereto, it would, so long as it remained, be an unspeakable hindrance to the worshipping of God in spirit and in truth. But the man of a truly catholic spirit, having weighed all things in the balance of the sanctuary, has no doubt, no scruple at all, concerning that particular mode of worship wherein he joins. He is clearly convinced, that *this* manner of worshipping God is both scriptural and rational. He knows none in the world which is more scriptural, none which is more rational. Therefore, without rambling hither and thither, he cleaves close thereto, and praises God for the opportunity of so doing.

3. Hence we may, thirdly, learn, that a catholic spirit is not indifference to all congregations. This is another sort of latitudinarianism, no less absurd and unscriptural than the former. But it is far from a man of a truly catholic spirit. He is fixed in his congregation as well as his principles. He is united to one, not only in spirit, but by all the outward ties of Christian fellowship. There he partakes of all the ordinances of God. There he receives the supper of the Lord. There he pours out his soul in public prayer, and joins in public praise and thanksgiving. There he rejoices to hear the word of reconciliation, the gospel of the grace of God. With these his nearest, his best-beloved brethren, on solemn occasions, he seeks God by fasting. These particularly he watches over in love, as they do over his soul; admonishing, exhorting, comforting, reproving, and every way building up each other in the faith. These he regards as his own household, and therefore, according to the ability God has given

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3. 'Congregations.' Wesley uses the word in the sense of 'denominations.' Tyndale adopts it in his N.T. in preference to 'church' as the translation of 'ecclesia'; and it was commonly used by the English

Reformers of the sixteenth century; so Luther uses 'Gemeinde' rather than 'Kirche.' In Article XIX it is stated: 'The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men.'

him, naturally cares for them, and provides that they may have all the things that are needful for life and godliness.

4. But while he is steadily fixed in his religious principles, in what he believes to be the truth as it is in Jesus, while he firmly adheres to that worship of God which he judges to be most acceptable in His sight, and while he is united by the tenderest and closest ties to one particular congregation,—his heart is enlarged toward all mankind, those he knows and those he does not, he embraces with strong and cordial affection neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies. This is catholic or universal love. And he that has this is of a catholic spirit. For love alone gives the title to this character : catholic love is a catholic spirit.

5. If, then, we take this word in the strictest sense, a man of a catholic spirit is one who, in the manner above-mentioned, gives his hand to all whose hearts are right with his heart one who knows how to value, and praise God for, all the advantages he enjoys, with regard to the knowledge of the things of God, the true scriptural manner of worshipping Him, and, above all, his union with a congregation fearing God and working righteousness one who, retaining these blessings with the strictest care, keeping them as the apple of his eye, at the same time loves—as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and fellow heirs of His eternal kingdom—all, of whatever opinion or worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please, and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is the man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all these continually upon his heart; who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and longing for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men, who speaks comfortably to them, and labours, by all his words, to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power in all things,

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4. 'One particular congregation,' i.e. one particular denomination or church.

spiritual and temporal. He is ready ' to spend and be spent for them ', yea, to lay down his life for their sake.

6. Thou, O man of God, think on these things ! If thou art already in this way, go on. If thou hast heretofore mistook the path, bless God who hath brought thee back ! And now run the race which is set before thee, in the royal way of universal love. Take heed, lest thou be either wavering in thy judgement, or straitened in thy bowels : but keep an even pace, rooted in the faith once delivered to the saints, and grounded in love, in true catholic love, till thou art swallowed up in love for ever and ever !

## SERMON XXXV

### CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

THIS sermon was first published in 1741, with Charles Wesley's hymn appended. In *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, 12, Wesley says: 'I think it was in the latter end of the year 1740 that I had a conversation with Dr. Gibson, then Bishop of London, at Whitehall. He asked me what I meant by perfection. I told him without any disguise or reserve. When I ceased speaking, he said, "Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to all the world. If any one then can confute what you say, he may have free leave." I answered, "My Lord, I will"; and accordingly wrote and published the sermon on Christian Perfection.' It is curious that there is no reference to this interview in the *Journal*; but on Sunday, January 4, 1741, Wesley preached from Phil. iii. 13, 14 at Bristol; and again at Kingswood on March 22. Phil. iii. was the subject of his expositions to the Bands in London during the first week in April. A second edition of the sermon appeared in 1743, published by Gooding of Newcastle, no doubt during Wesley's visit there in March.

*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection as believed and taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley from the year 1725 to the year 1765* was published in 1766. In the fourth edition the title is altered to 'from the year 1725 to the year 1777.' In it he traces the steps by which he was led to embrace this doctrine, and names and gives large extracts from the various works in which he advocated it. He finds the origin of it in Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, which he read in 1725; Thomas à Kempis in 1726; and 'a year or two after' Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* convinced him more than ever of the necessity of being wholly devoted to God. His study of the Bible confirmed what he had learnt from these writers, and in the sermon on the Circumcision of the Heart (No. XIII), preached before the University in 1733, he declared the possibility and duty of perfection; and he says that this is the view he still holds 'without any material addition or diminution.' He goes on to quote from the *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), *The Character of a Methodist* (1742), this sermon (1741) the preface to the second volume of *Hymns* (1741).

and the *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), the *Minutes* of 1744, 1745, 1746, and 1747, Charles Wesley's *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1749 and 1752), *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, appended to the fourth volume of the *Sermons* (1760), *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection* (1763), *Cautions and Directions to the Greatest Professors* (1762), and a brief review of the whole subject, written in 1764, and printed in full. He sums it up from three points of view as (1) Purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God; (2) All the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked; the renewal of the heart in the whole image of God; (3) Loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; in other words, Full Consecration, Entire Sanctification, Perfect Love. On January 27, 1767, he wrote a page of 'Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection,' which he published in his collected *Works*, 1771. The student should also read Sermon LXXVI, on Heb. vi. 1.

In spite of his assertion that his views had not changed in any material point from 1725 to 1765, he certainly modified them as time went on. In the earlier sermons, e.g. *The Almost Christian*, *Circumcision of the Heart*, *The Witness of our own Spirit*, he teaches that the justified believer is entirely freed from sin at his conversion. But this he corrects in the sermons on *Sin in Believers* and *The Repentance of Believers* (1767), in which he maintains that, though the believer is saved from outward sin, yet inward sin, the carnal mind, still remains and wars against the spirit. 'We may by the spirit mortify the deeds of the body; yet . . . by all the grace which is given at justification we cannot extirpate them. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord to speak the second time "Be clean"; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more' (Sermon XLVII, i. 20). So in *Farther Thoughts*, Q. 15, he says of the entirely sanctified man, 'One commends me. Here is a temptation to pride. But instantly my soul is humbled before God, and I feel no pride. A man strikes me. Here is a temptation to anger. But my heart overflows with love. And I feel no anger at all. A woman solicits me. Here is a temptation to lust. But in the instant I shrink back; and I feel no desire or lust at all.' The justified man feels pride, or anger, or lust; but by the grace of God he does not yield to them; the entirely sanctified man does not feel them at all. Wesley was profoundly right when he taught that the only way by which such a result could be achieved was the complete domination of the love of God in the heart. Both he and many of his followers have been brought into some confusion of view by the idea that the carnal mind is something in man which can be removed, like an aching tooth or a cancerous growth; or a sort of stain or defilement which can be washed away, like an ink-blot, or a patch of filth on the body. Now

the carnal mind is not a *thing* at all. It is really the absence of a sufficient inhibition upon the desires of the flesh and the mind. Recent psychological investigations have shown that the strongest instincts can be completely inhibited by a dominating emotion, so that they are not even felt. The sense of loyalty and devotion to duty will do it; many of our boys who have been at the front in the late war have told me that though beforehand they were horribly afraid, yet when the time came to 'go over the top' all fear vanished, and the only thought present to their minds was the exhilarating sense of a duty to be done. Fear can utterly annihilate all other feelings; so can hate; so can anger. I remember when I was a child dashing my hand through a glass window to strike a little playmate in a fit of rage, without the slightest fear of the consequences; and I bear the scar of the cut to this day. Professor James instances a mother rushing into the street in her night-gown in front of a motor-car to save her child's life; in the passion of mother-love she felt neither shame nor fear. Now, of all such inhibitions, love is the strongest; and of all loves, the love of God. The destruction of the carnal mind thus means its total inhibition by the love of God ruling in the heart; it is what has well been called 'the expulsive power of a higher affection.' In the overwhelming sense of the love of God no other feeling can as much as rise into consciousness. And Wesley was right in saying that this effect is often instantaneous. Professor James gives definite and well-authenticated cases of instantaneous deliverance from resentment, from fear, from the craving for drink and tobacco, even from sexual desire, by the domination of the divine love. And in many of the cases he quotes the desire never returned, even after the immediate excitement had passed away. One of the foulest-mouthed men in a Yorkshire village in my old circuit got converted. The next Sunday I met him in the class; and he told us that the day after his conversion, he had slipped on the ice and struck his head on the edge of a step, and to his amazement, as he put it, 'when I got up, I wasn't swearing.' Of course one experience of this complete exaltation above even the rising of desire does not guarantee its continuance; one of the wisest things Wesley ever said on the subject is at the end of the *Minutes* of 1770: 'Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas, we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works; according to the whole of our inward tempers, and our outward behaviour.' Still, the tendency is for the experience to become more and more habitual, until it is practically continuous.

At first Wesley was disposed to think that, once attained, the experience could never be lost, and that it included the assurance of final perseverance; but he changed his view on this point and declared

in *Thoughts* (1767), 'I do not include an impossibility of falling from it, either in part or in whole.'

Admitting the possibility in the perfect Christian of infirmity and mistake, he was willing to give up the phrase 'sinless perfection,' though he saw no real objection to it, as mistakes and infirmities are not properly sins. He believed that it was to be obtained by faith; and if by faith, it might be now. But he also believed that that act of faith must be preceded by a gradual work of grace, through which faith became perfected. Faith can only be strengthened by exercise; and only a strong faith can grasp the fullness of the promises. As to the time at which the blessing is received, he says in 1767, 'I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before.' He never professed himself to have received it. Logically, he could see no reason why the ideal could not be at any time realized, provided a man had the requisite faith; but he came more and more to see that it *was* an ideal, to which the believer approximates ever more closely, though it may be impossible to say that he has absolutely attained it. It would have saved him a good deal of trouble if he had seen clearly that the Scripture sets up an ideal, both for the justified and the entirely sanctified believer, which is not at all less valuable because it *is* an ideal. Geometry loses none of its value because there never was *in rerum natura* a perfectly straight line or an absolutely true circle.

I strongly recommend all students of this subject to read my old chief—the Rev. Benjamin Hellier's—essay on 'The Scriptural Doctrine of Holiness,' and his address on 'The Preaching of Holiness,' both contained in his *Life* by his son and daughter. I know nothing so sane and stimulating; and it was my great privilege to hear from his own lips the arguments there set forth, and to see his doctrine daily illustrated in his life.

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*Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect.*—  
PHIL. iii. 12.

I. THERE is scarce any expression in holy writ, which has given more offence than this. The word *perfect* is what many cannot bear. The very sound of it is an abomination to them; and whosoever *preaches perfection* (as the phrase is), that is, asserts that it is attainable in this life, runs great hazard of being accounted by them worse than a heathen man or a publican.

2. And hence, some have advised, wholly to lay aside the use of those expressions, 'because they have given so great offence.' But are they not found in the oracles of God? If so, by what authority can any messenger of God lay them aside, even though all men should be offended? We have not so learned Christ; neither may we thus give place to the devil. Whatsoever God hath spoken, that will we speak, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear; knowing, that then alone can any minister of Christ be 'pure from the blood of all men,' when he hath 'not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God.'

3. We may not, therefore, lay these expressions aside, seeing they are the words of God and not of man. But we may and ought to explain the meaning of them, that those who are sincere of heart may not err to the right hand or left, from the mark of the prize of their high calling. And this is the more needful to be done, because, in the verse already repeated, the Apostle speaks of himself as not perfect 'Not,' saith he, 'as though I were already perfect.' And yet immediately after, in the fifteenth verse, he speaks of himself, yea, and many others, as perfect: 'Let us,' saith he, 'as many as be perfect, be thus minded.'

4. In order, therefore, to remove the difficulty arising from this seeming contradiction, as well as to give light to them who are pressing forward to the mark, and that those who are lame be not turned out of the way, I shall endeavour to show,—

- I. IN WHAT SENSE CHRISTIANS ARE NOT, AND,  
II. IN WHAT SENSE THEY ARE, PERFECT.

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Par. 3. The passage in Philippians may be paraphrased: 'Do not mistake me; I did not at my conversion' (aorist) 'receive the fullness of the blessing at which I am aiming, nor have I yet been made perfect. I am still pressing forward in the race, &c. Let as many of us, then, as reckon ourselves perfect—

full-grown men, and no longer babes in Christ—show this same spirit of eager pursuit of fuller blessing.' There is a touch of gentle sarcasm in the second sentence; though St. Paul takes the sting out of it by associating himself with these alleged 'perfect' people.

I. 1. In the first place, I shall endeavour to show, in what sense Christians are *not perfect*. And both from experience and Scripture it appears, first, that they are not perfect in knowledge: they are not so perfect in this life as to be free from ignorance. They know, it may be, in common with other men, many things relating to the present world; and they know, with regard to the world to come, the general truths which God hath revealed. They know likewise (what the natural man receiveth not; for these things are spiritually discerned) 'what manner of love' it is, wherewith 'the Father' hath loved them, 'that they should be called the sons of God.' They know the mighty working of His Spirit in their hearts, and the wisdom of His providence, directing all their paths, and causing all things to work together for their good. Yea, they know in every circumstance of life what the Lord requireth of them, and how to keep a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward man.

2. But innumerable are the things which they know not. Touching the Almighty Himself, they cannot search Him out to perfection. 'Lo, these are but a part of His ways, but the thunder of His power, who can understand?' They cannot understand, I will not say, how 'there are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these Three are One'; or how the eternal Son of God 'took upon Himself the form of a servant';—but not any one attribute, not any one circumstance, of the divine nature. Neither is it for them to know the times and seasons when God will work His great works upon the earth; no, not even those which He hath in part revealed by His servants and prophets since the world began. Much less do they know when God, having 'accomplished the number of His elect, will hasten His kingdom'; when 'the heavens shall pass

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I. 2. As every one knows, the passage about the Three Heavenly Witnesses has no authority of any value; it is an interpolation in the Epistle. But this warning is most salutary; no Christian, however

perfect, can claim to understand the doctrines of the Trinity or the Incarnation, nor to predict the time of the second coming of our Lord, as so many fanatics in all ages have affected to do.

away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat.'

3. They know not the reasons even of many of His present dispensations with the sons of men ; but are constrained to rest here : Though ' clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgement are the habitation of His seat.' Yea, often with regard to His dealings with themselves, doth their Lord say unto them, ' What I do, thou knowest not now ; but thou shalt know hereafter.' And how little do they know of what is ever before them, of even the visible works of His hands !—how ' He spreadeth the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing ' ; how He unites all the parts of this vast machine by a secret chain, which cannot be broken. So great is the ignorance, so very little the knowledge, of even the best of men !

4. No one, then, is so perfect in this life, as to be free from ignorance. Nor, secondly, from mistake ; which indeed is almost an unavoidable consequence of it ; seeing those who ' know but in part ' are ever liable to err touching the things which they know not. It is true, the children of God do not mistake as to the things essential to salvation : they do not ' put darkness for light, or light for darkness ', neither ' seek death in the error of their life.' For they are ' taught of God ', and the way which He teaches them, the way of holiness, is so plain, that ' the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein.' But in things unessential to salvation they do err, and that frequently. The best and wisest of men are frequently mistaken, even with regard to facts ; believing those things not to have been which really were, or those to have been done which were not. Or, suppose they are not mistaken as to the fact itself, they may be with regard to its circumstances ; believing them, or many of them, to have been quite different from what, in truth, they were. And hence cannot but arise many farther mistakes. Hence they

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3. See Sermon LXIX, on The Imperfection of Human Knowledge.

4. ' Seek death in the error of their life ' : a quotation from Wisdom i. 12.

may believe either past or present actions which were or are evil, to be good, and such as were or are good, to be evil. Hence also they may judge not according to truth with regard to the characters of men; and that, not only by supposing good men to be better, or wicked men to be worse, than they are; but by believing them to have been or to be good men, who were or are very wicked; or perhaps those to have been or to be wicked men, who were or are holy and unprovable.

5. Nay, with regard to the holy Scriptures themselves, as careful as they are to avoid it, the best of men are liable to mistake, and do mistake day by day; especially with respect to those parts thereof which less immediately relate to practice. Hence, even the children of God are not agreed as to the interpretation of many places in holy writ; nor is their difference of opinion any proof that they are not the children of God, on either side; but it is a proof that we are no more to expect any living man to be infallible, than to be omniscient.

6. If it be objected to what has been observed under this and the preceding head, that St. John, speaking to his brethren in the faith, says, 'Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things' (1 John ii. 20); the answer is plain: 'Ye know all things that are needful for your souls' health.' That the Apostle never designed to extend this farther, that he could not speak it in an absolute sense, is clear, first, from hence: that otherwise he would describe the disciple as 'above his Master', seeing Christ Himself, as man, knew not all things. 'Of that hour,' saith He, 'knoweth no man: no, not the Son,

6. The best attested reading in 1 John ii. 20 is, 'And ye have an anointing from the Holy One; ye all know—I do not write unto you because ye do not know—the Truth.'

The limitation of our Lord's knowledge is a part of His self-emptying, or *kenosis*. Not only in the passage here quoted is it shown that His knowledge was limited; but throughout His life we find Him seeking for

information by asking questions, and generally making no use for Himself of any knowledge other than was open to any one of ordinary intelligence. See Adamson's *Mind in Christ*. But to say that 'Christ as man' knew not all things is to divide the indivisibly one Person; it was as the one Christ that He thought and acted, knew and was ignorant.

but the Father only.' It is clear, secondly, from the Apostle's own words that follow, 'These things have I written unto you concerning them that deceive you'; as well as from his frequently repeated caution, 'Let no man deceive you'; which had been altogether needless, had not those very persons who had that unction from the Holy One been liable, not to ignorance only, but to mistake also.

7. Even Christians, therefore, are not so perfect as to be free either from ignorance or error: we may, thirdly, add, nor from infirmities. Only let us take care to understand this word aright: only let us not give that soft title to known sins, as the manner of some is. So, one man tells us, 'Every man has his infirmity, and mine is drunkenness'; another has the infirmity of uncleanness; another, that of taking God's holy name in vain; and yet another has the infirmity of calling his brother, 'Thou fool,' or returning 'railing for railing.' It is plain that all you who thus speak, if ye repent not, shall, with your infirmities, go quick into hell! But I mean hereby, not only those which are properly termed *bodily infirmities*, but all those inward or outward imperfections which are not of a moral nature. Such are the weakness or slowness of understanding, dullness or confusedness of apprehension, incoherency of thought, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such (to mention no more of this kind) is the want of a ready or retentive memory. Such, in another kind, are those which are commonly, in some measure, consequent upon these; namely, slowness of speech, impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation, to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. These are the infirmities which are found in the best of men, in a larger or smaller proportion. And from these none can hope to be perfectly freed, till the spirit returns to God that gave it.

8. Nor can we expect, till then, to be wholly free from temptation. Such perfection belongeth not to this life. It is true, there are those who, being given up to work all uncleanness with greediness, scarce perceive the temptations which they resist not; and so seem to be without temptation. There

are also many whom the wise enemy of souls seeing to be fast asleep in the dead form of godliness, will not tempt to gross sin, lest they should awake before they drop into everlasting burnings. I know there are also children of God who, being now justified freely, having found redemption in the blood of Christ, for the present feel no temptation. God hath said to their enemies, 'Touch not Mine anointed, and do My children no harm.' And for this season, it may be for weeks or months, He causeth them to ride on high places, He beareth them as on eagles' wings, above all the fiery darts of the wicked one. But this state will not last always, as we may learn from that single consideration, that the Son of God Himself, in the days of His flesh, was tempted even to the end of His life. Therefore, so let his servant expect to be; for 'it is enough that he be as his Master.'

9. Christian perfection, therefore, does not imply (as some men seem to have imagined) an exemption either from ignorance, or mistake, or infirmities, or temptations. Indeed, it is only another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one that is holy is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may, lastly, observe, that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no *perfection of degrees*, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to 'grow in grace,' and daily to advance in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour.

II. 1. In what sense, then, are Christians perfect? This is what I shall endeavour, in the second place, to show. But it should be premised, that there are several stages in Christian life, as in natural; some of the children of God being but

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9. 'Perfection of degrees.' This rather curious phrase seems to mean a perfection which has reached the highest point, and is therefore not capable of any higher steps or degrees. This is a most important

qualification of Wesley's teaching. As he says in the *Brief Thoughts* (1767), 'I believe a gradual work both preceding and following that instant'; i.e. the instant of entire sanctification.

new-born babes, others having attained to more maturity. And accordingly St. John, in his First Epistle (ii. 12, &c.), applies himself severally to those he terms 'little children,' those he styles 'young men,' and those whom he entitles 'fathers.' 'I write unto you, little children,' saith the Apostle, 'because your sins are forgiven you': because thus far you have attained, being 'justified freely,' you 'have peace with God through Jesus Christ.' 'I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one' or (as he afterwards addeth), 'because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you.' Ye have quenched the fiery darts of the wicked one, the doubts and fears wherewith he disturbed your first peace; and the witness of God, that your sins are forgiven, now abideth in your heart. 'I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known Him that is from the beginning.' Ye have known both the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit of Christ, in your inmost soul. Ye are 'perfect men,' being grown up to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.'

2. It is of these chiefly I speak in the latter part of this discourse, for these only are perfect Christians. But even babes in Christ are in such a sense perfect, or born of God (an expression taken also in divers senses), as, first, not to commit sin. If any doubt of this privilege of the sons of God, the question is not to be decided by abstract reasonings, which may be drawn out into an endless length, and leave the point just as it was before. Neither is it to be determined by the experience of this or that particular person. Many may suppose they do not commit sin, when they do; but this proves nothing either way. To the law and to the testimony we appeal. 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' By His Word will we abide, and that alone. Hereby we ought to be judged.

3. Now, the Word of God plainly declares, that even those who are justified, who are born again in the lowest sense, 'do not continue in sin', that they cannot 'live any longer therein' (Rom. vi. 1, 2); that they are 'planted together in

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II. 2. See Sermon I, ii. 6, and Sermon XV.

the likeness of the death' of Christ (verse 5); that their 'old man is crucified with Him,' the body of sin being destroyed, so that henceforth they do not serve sin; that, being dead with Christ, they are free from sin (verses 6, 7); that they are 'dead unto sin, and alive unto God' (verse 11); that 'sin hath no more dominion over them,' who are 'not under the law, but under grace'; but that these, 'being free from sin are become the servants of righteousness' (verses 14, 18).

4. The very least which can be implied in these words, is, that the persons spoken of therein, namely, all real Christians, or believers in Christ, are made free from outward sin. And the same freedom, which St. Paul here expresses in such variety of phrases, St. Peter expresses in that one (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2): 'He that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live to the desires of men, but to the will of God.' For this *ceasing from sin*, if it be interpreted in the lowest sense, as regarding only the outward behaviour, must denote the ceasing from the outward act, from any outward transgression of the law.

5. But most express are the well-known words of St. John, in the third chapter of his First Epistle, verse 8, &c.: 'He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.' And those in the fifth (verse 18): 'We know that whosoever is born

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4. The meaning of this difficult passage from 1 Peter may be paraphrased thus: 'He that in meekness and fear hath endured persecution rather than join in the wicked ways of the heathen, can be trusted to do right; temptation has manifestly no power over him.' He has proved his power over sin (Dr. Bigg). This interpretation does not affect Wesley's argument; the man has

obviously and in spite of severe temptation 'ceased from sin.'

5. See Sermon XV and notes. St. John here sets forth the *ideal* of the Christian life; this is what every man that is born of God should be, and by the grace of God may be. That the ideal is rarely, or perhaps never, fully and without flaw realized does not affect its value as the object to be aimed at.

of God sinneth not ; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.'

6. Indeed it is said, this means only, He sinneth not *wilfully* , or he doth not commit sin *habitually* , or, *not as other men do* ; or, *not as he did before*. But by whom is this said ? by St. John ? No : there is no such word in the text ; nor in the whole chapter ; nor in all his Epistle ; nor in any part of his writings whatsoever. Why, then, the best way to answer a bold assertion is, simply to deny it. And if any man can prove it from the Word of God, let him bring forth his strong reasons.

7. And a sort of reason there is, which has been frequently brought to support these strange assertions, drawn from the examples recorded in the Word of God : ' What ! ' say they, ' did not Abraham himself commit sin—prevaricating, and denying his wife ? Did not Moses commit sin, when he provoked God at the waters of strife ? Nay, to produce one for all, did not even David, " the man after God's own heart," commit sin, in the matter of Uriah the Hittite ; even murder and adultery ? ' It is most sure he did. All this is true. But what is it you would infer from hence ? It may be granted, first, that David, in the general course of his life, was one of the holiest men among the Jews ; and, secondly, that the holiest men among the Jews did sometimes commit sin. But if you would hence infer, that all Christians do and must commit sin as long as they live, this consequence we utterly deny : it will never follow from those premisses.

8. Those who argue thus seem never to have considered that declaration of our Lord (Matt. xi. 11) : ' Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist : notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.' I fear, indeed, there are some who have imagined ' the kingdom of heaven,' here, to mean the kingdom of glory ; as if the Son of God had just discovered to us, that

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8. This answer is most pertinent.      a progressive revelation ; we may  
The Old Testament is the record of      learn valuable lessons from the lives

the least glorified saint in heaven is greater than any man upon earth! To mention this is sufficiently to refute it. There can, therefore, no doubt be made, but 'the kingdom of heaven,' here (as in the following verse, where it is said to be taken by force), or, 'the kingdom of God,' as St. Luke expresses it, is that kingdom of God on earth whereunto all true believers in Christ, all real Christians, belong. In these words, then, our Lord declares two things: First, that before His coming in the flesh, among all the children of men there had not been one greater than John the Baptist; whence it evidently follows, that neither Abraham, David, nor any Jew, was greater than John. Our Lord, secondly, declares, that he which is least in the kingdom of God (in that kingdom which He came to set up on earth, and which the violent now began to take by force) is greater than he,—not a greater prophet, as some have interpreted the word; for this is palpably false in fact, but greater in the grace of God, and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore we cannot measure the privileges of real Christians by those formerly given to the Jews. Their 'ministration' (or dispensation), we allow, 'was glorious'; but ours 'exceeds in glory.' So that whosoever would bring down the Christian dispensation to the Jewish standard, whosoever gleans up the examples of weakness, recorded in the law and the prophets, and thence infers that they who have 'put on Christ' are endued with no greater strength, doth greatly err, neither 'knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God.'

9. 'But are there not assertions in Scripture which prove the same thing, if it cannot be inferred from those examples? Does not the Scripture say expressly, "Even a just man sinneth seven times a day"? ' I answer, No, the Scripture says no such thing. There is no such text in all the Bible. That which seems to be intended is the sixteenth verse of the twenty-fourth

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there related, for they were men like ourselves; but they lived in the twilight, and are by no means perfect examples for us, on whom the Day-spring from on high hath shone.

9. The passage (Prov. xxiv. 16) runs: 'A righteous man falleth seven times, and riseth up again; but the wicked are overthrown by calamity.'

chapter of the Proverbs ; the words of which are these : ' A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.' But this is quite another thing. For, first, the words ' a day ' are not in the text. So that if a just man fall seven times in his life, it is as much as is affirmed here. Secondly, here is no mention of *falling into sin* at all what is here mentioned is, *falling into temporal affliction*. This plainly appears from the verse before, the words of which are these ' Lay not wait, O wicked man, against the dwelling of the righteous ; spoil not his resting-place.' It follows, ' For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again : but the wicked shall fall into mischief.' As if he had said, ' God will deliver him out of his trouble ; but when thou fallest, there shall be none to deliver thee.'

10. ' But, however, in other places,' continue the objectors, ' Solomon does assert plainly, " There is no man that sinneth not " (1 Kings viii. 46 ; 2 Chron. vi. 36) , yea, " There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not " ' (Eccles. vii. 20). I answer, Without doubt, thus it was in the days of Solomon. Yea, thus it was from Adam to Moses, from Moses to Solomon, and from Solomon to Christ. There was then no man that sinned not. Even from the day that sin entered into the world, there was not a just man upon earth that did good and sinned not, until the Son of God was manifested to take away our sins. It is unquestionably true, that ' the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant.' And that even so they (all the holy men of old, who were under the Jewish dispensation) were, during that infant state of the Church, ' in bondage under the elements of the world.' ' But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons,'—that they might receive that ' grace which is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ ; who hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light

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10. Even if it were still true that there is no man that sinneth not, it would not affect the truth of the ideal set before us by the Apostle.

through the gospel' (2 Tim. i. 10). Now, therefore, they 'are no more servants, but sons.' So that, whatsoever was the case of those under the law, we may safely affirm with St. John, that, since the gospel was given, 'he that is born of God sinneth not.'

11. It is of great importance to observe, and that more carefully than is commonly done, the wide difference there is between the Jewish and the Christian dispensation, and that ground of it which the same Apostle assigns in the seventh chapter of his Gospel (verses 38, &c.). After he had there related those words of our blessed Lord, 'He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water,' he immediately subjoins, 'This spake He of the Spirit—*οὗ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύοντες εἰς αὐτόν*—*which they who should believe on Him were afterwards to receive.* For the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.' Now, the Apostle cannot mean here (as some have taught), that the miracle-working power of the Holy Ghost was not yet given. For this was given our Lord had given it to all His Apostles, when He first sent them forth to preach the gospel. He then gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out, power to heal the sick; yea, to raise the dead. But the Holy Ghost was not yet given in His sanctifying graces, as He was after Jesus was glorified. It was then when 'He ascended up on high, and led captivity captive,' that He 'received' those 'gifts for men, yea, even for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them.' And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, then first it was, that they who 'waited for the promise of the Father' were made more than conquerors over sin by the Holy Ghost given unto them.

12. That this great salvation from sin was not given till Jesus was glorified, St. Peter also plainly testifies, where, speaking of his brethren in the flesh, as now 'receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls,' he adds (1 Pet. i. 9, 10, &c.), 'Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace,' that is, the gracious dispensation, 'that should come unto you:

searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory,' the glorious salvation, 'that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven'; namely, at the day of Pentecost, and so unto all generations, into the hearts of all true believers. On this ground, even 'the grace which was brought unto them by the revelation of Jesus Christ,' the Apostle might well build that strong exhortation, 'Wherefore girding up the loins of your mind, . . . as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.'

13. Those who have duly considered these things must allow, that the privileges of Christians are in no wise to be measured by what the Old Testament records concerning those who were under the Jewish dispensation; seeing the fullness of time is now come, the Holy Ghost is now given, the great salvation of God is brought unto men by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The kingdom of heaven is now set up on earth; concerning which the Spirit of God declared of old (so far is David from being the pattern or standard of Christian perfection), 'He that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David; and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before them' (Zech. xii. 8).

14. If, therefore, you would prove that the Apostle's words, 'He that is born of God sinneth not,' are not to be understood according to their plain, natural, obvious meaning, it is from the New Testament you are to bring your proofs, else you will fight as one that beateth the air. And the first of these which is usually brought is taken from the examples recorded in the New Testament. 'The Apostles themselves,' it is said, 'committed sin; nay, the greatest of them, Peter and Paul: St. Paul, by his sharp contention with Barnabas, and St. Peter, by his dissimulation at Antioch.' Well, suppose

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14. See Sermon XV, ii. 5 and note.

both Peter and Paul did then commit sin ; what is it you would infer from hence ? that all the other Apostles committed sin sometimes ? There is no shadow of proof in this. Or would you thence infer, that all the other Christians of the apostolic age committed sin ? Worse and worse : this is such an inference as, one would imagine, a man in his senses could never have thought of. Or will you argue thus : ‘ If two of the Apostles did once commit sin, then all other Christians, in all ages, do and will commit sin as long as they live ’ ? Alas, my brother ! a child of common understanding would be ashamed of such reasoning as this. Least of all can you with any colour of argument infer, that any man *must* commit sin at all. No ; God forbid we should thus speak ! No necessity of sinning was laid upon them. The grace of God was surely sufficient for them. And it is sufficient for us at this day. With the temptation which fell on them, there was a way to escape ; as there is to every soul of man in every temptation. So that whosoever is tempted to any sin, need not yield ; for no man is tempted above that he is able to bear.

15. ‘ But St. Paul besought the Lord thrice, and yet he could not escape from his temptation.’ Let us consider his own words literally translated ‘ There was given to me a thorn in the flesh, an angel’ or messenger ‘ of Satan, to buffet me. Touching this I besought the Lord thrice, that it,’ or he, ‘ might depart from me. And He said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee for My strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in’ these ‘ my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in weaknesses ; . . for when I am weak, then am I strong.’

16. As this scripture is one of the strongholds of the patrons of sin, it may be proper to weigh it thoroughly. Let it be observed, then, first, it does by no means appear that this thorn, whatsoever it was, occasioned St. Paul to commit sin, much less laid him under any necessity of doing so. There-

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16. Many suggestions have been made as to the exact nature of St. Paul’s ‘ stake in the flesh ’ ; the most plausible are that it was ophthalmia, or malaria, or epilepsy. It has been conjectured to be a hot,

fore, from hence it can never be proved that any Christian must commit sin. Secondly, the Ancient Fathers inform us, it was bodily pain,—a violent headache, saith Tertullian (*De Pudic.*), to which both Chrysostom and St. Jerome agree. St. Cyprian expresses it, a little more generally, in those terms, ‘Many and grievous torments of the flesh and of the body.’ Thirdly, to this exactly agree the Apostle’s own words ‘A thorn in the flesh, to smite, beat, or buffet me.’ ‘My strength is made perfect in weakness’, which same word occurs no less than four times in these two verses only. But, fourthly, whatsoever it was, it could not be either inward or outward sin. It could no more be inward stirrings, than outward expressions, of pride, anger, or lust. This is manifest, beyond all possible exception, from the words that immediately follow: ‘Most gladly will I glory in’ these ‘my weaknesses, that the strength of Christ may rest upon me.’ What! did he glory in pride, in anger, in lust? Was it through these *weaknesses* that the strength of Christ rested upon him? He goes on: ‘Therefore, I take pleasure in weaknesses; for when I am weak, then am I strong’, that is, when I am weak *in body*, then am I strong *in spirit*. But will any man dare to say, ‘When I am weak by pride or lust, then am I strong in spirit’? I call you all to record this day, who find the strength of Christ resting upon you, can you glory in anger, or pride, or lust? Can you take pleasure in these infirmities? Do these weaknesses make you strong? Would you not leap into hell, were it possible, to escape them? Even by yourselves, then, judge, whether the Apostle could glory and take pleasure in them. Let it be, lastly, observed, that this thorn was given to St. Paul above fourteen years before he wrote this Epistle; which itself was wrote several years before he finished his course. So that he had, after this, a long course to run, many battles to fight, many victories to gain, and great increase to receive in all the gifts of God, and

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sensual disposition; but this is negatived at once by Wesley’s argument that he could never have gloried in this. The last considera-

tion in this paragraph, that in any case it was given to him fourteen years before he wrote this epistle, is quite unnecessary.

the knowledge of Jesus Christ. Therefore, from any spiritual weakness (if such had been) which he at that time felt, we could by no means infer that he was never made strong, that Paul the aged, the father in Christ, still laboured under the same weaknesses : that he was in no higher state till the day of his death. From all which it appears, that this instance of St. Paul is quite foreign to the question, and does in no wise clash with the assertion of St. John, 'He that is born of God sinneth not.'

17. 'But does not St. James directly contradict this? His words are, "In many things we offend all" (iii. 2) and is not offending the same as committing sin?' In this place, I allow it is I allow the persons here spoken of did commit sin, yea, that they all committed many sins. But who are the persons here spoken of? Why, those many masters or teachers, whom God had not sent (probably the same vain men who taught that faith without works, which is so sharply reproved in the preceding chapter); not the Apostle himself, nor any real Christian. That in the word *we* (used by a figure of speech common in all other, as well as the inspired, writings) the Apostle could not possibly include himself or any other true believer, appears evidently, first, from the same word in the ninth verse 'Therewith,' saith he, 'bless we God, and therewith curse we men. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing.' True, but not out of the mouth of the Apostle, nor of any one who is in Christ a new creature. Secondly, from the verse immediately preceding the text, and manifestly connected with it: 'My brethren, be not many masters' (or teachers), 'knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.' 'For in many things *we* offend all.' *We!* Who? Not the Apostles, nor true believers: but they who knew they should *receive the greater condemnation*.

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17. The whole passage in Jas. iii. 2 runs: 'Do not many of you become teachers, knowing that we [the teachers] shall receive greater condemnation' owing to our office, which entails greater responsibility.

'For we all make many slips. If any man does not slip in speech, he is a perfect man.' The 'we' mean 'we men,' the writer including himself in the whole human race as he does again in verse 9.

because of those many offences. But this could not be spoke of the Apostle himself, or of any who trod in his steps, seeing 'there is no condemnation to them who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Nay, thirdly, the very verse itself proves, that, 'We offend all,' cannot be spoken either of all men, or of all Christians: for in it there immediately follows the mention of a man who *offends not*, as the *we* first mentioned did, from whom, therefore, he is professedly contradistinguished, and pronounced a *perfect man*.

18. So clearly does St. James explain himself, and fix the meaning of his own words. Yet, lest any one should still remain in doubt, St. John, writing many years after St. James, puts the matter entirely out of dispute by the express declarations above recited. But here a fresh difficulty may arise: how shall we reconcile St. John with himself? In one place he declares, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin'; and again, 'We know that he which is born of God sinneth not', and yet in another, he saith, 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us'; and again, 'If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.'

19. As great a difficulty as this may at first appear, it vanishes away, if we observe, first, that the tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth: 'If we say we have no sin,' in the former, being explained by, 'If we say we have not sinned,' in the latter verse. Secondly, that the point under present consideration is not whether we *have or have not sinned heretofore*; and neither of these verses asserts that we *do sin, or commit sin now*. Thirdly, that the ninth verse explains both the eighth and tenth 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness': as if he had said, 'I have before affirmed, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin"', but let no man say, I need it not; I have no sin to be cleansed from. If we say that we have no sin, that we have not sinned,

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18. Here again the 'we' means in his nature, or that he has never  
'men in general.' 'If any man says committed actual sin, he is a liar,'  
either that there is no sinful principle

we deceive ourselves, and make God a liar : but “ if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just,” not only “ to forgive our sins,” but also “ to cleanse us from all unrighteousness ” ; that we may “ go and sin no more.” ’

20. St. John, therefore, is well consistent with himself, as well as with the other holy writers ; as will yet more evidently appear, if we place all his assertions touching this matter in one view ; he declares, first, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin. Secondly, no man can say, I have not sinned, I have no sin to be cleansed from. Thirdly, but God is ready both to forgive our past sins, and to save us from them for the time to come. Fourthly, ‘ These things write I unto you,’ saith the Apostle, ‘ that you may not sin. But if any man ’ should ‘ sin,’ or *have sinned* (as the word might be rendered), he need not continue in sin, seeing ‘ we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.’ Thus far all is clear. But lest any doubt should remain in a point of so vast importance, the Apostle resumes this subject in the third chapter, and largely explains his own meaning : ‘ Little children,’ saith he, ‘ let no man deceive you ’ : (as though I had given any encouragement to those that continue in sin) : ‘ he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil ; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ; for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil ’ (verses 7–10). Here the point, which till then might possibly have admitted of some doubt in weak minds, is purposely settled by the last of the inspired writers, and decided in the clearest manner. In conformity, therefore, both to the doctrine of St. John, and to the whole

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20. The object of the Apostle’s writing is to save his readers from sin by setting before them the Christian ideal of a sinless life ; but if they should sin (not ‘ have sinned ’)

they need not despair ; Christ is the propitiation for our sins, the sins of His own people, as well as for those of the whole world. The ideal is set up, not to condemn, but to save.

tenor of the New Testament, we fix this conclusion,—*a Christian is so far perfect, as not to commit sin.*

21. This is the glorious privilege of every Christian ; yea, though he be but *a babe in Christ*. But it is only of those who *are strong* in the Lord, ‘ and have overcome the wicked one,’ or rather of those who ‘ have known Him that is from the beginning,’ that it can be affirmed they are in such a sense perfect, as, secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. First, from evil or sinful thoughts. But here let it be observed, that thoughts concerning evil are not always evil thoughts ; that a thought concerning sin, and a sinful thought, are widely different. A man, for instance, may think of a murder which another has committed, and yet this is no evil or sinful thought. So our blessed Lord Himself doubtless thought of, or understood, the thing spoken by the devil, when he said, ‘ All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.’ Yet had He no evil or sinful thought, nor indeed was capable of having any. And even hence it follows, that neither have real Christians ; for ‘ every one that is perfect is as his Master ’ (Luke vi. 40). Therefore, if He was free from evil or sinful thoughts, so are they likewise.

22. And, indeed, whence should evil thoughts proceed, in the servant who is *as his Master* ? ‘ Out of the heart of man ’ (if at all) ‘ proceed evil thoughts ’ (Mark vii. 21). If, therefore, his heart be no longer evil, then evil thoughts can no longer proceed out of it. If the tree were corrupt, so would be the fruit but the tree is good, the fruit, therefore, is good also (Matt. xii. 33) ; our Lord Himself bearing witness, ‘ Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit,’ as ‘ a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit ’ (Matt. vii. 17, 18).

23. The same happy privilege of real Christians, St. Paul

21. All that has been said hitherto applies to the justified man ; we now come to the consideration of the entirely sanctified believer. As Mr. Hellier says (‘ Preaching of Holiness ’), ‘ We may have passing through our minds a thousand

thoughts about sin, and yet have not one *sinful thought*.’ No thought is sinful until it is voluntarily welcomed and dwelt upon. As to our Lord’s temptation, see Sermon XXXVI, iii. 6.

asserts from his own experience. 'The weapons of our warfare,' saith he, 'are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations' (or *reasonings* rather, for so the word λογισμούς signifies; all the reasonings of pride and unbelief against the declarations, promises, or gifts of God), 'and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ' (2 Cor. x. 4, &c.).

24. And as Christians indeed are freed from evil thoughts, so are they, secondly, from evil tempers. This is evident from the above-mentioned declaration of our Lord Himself: 'The disciple is not above his Master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master.' He had been delivering, just before, some of the sublimest doctrines of Christianity, and some of the most grievous to flesh and blood. 'I say unto you, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, and unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other.' Now these He well knew the world would not receive; and therefore immediately adds, 'Can the blind lead the blind? will they not both fall into the ditch?' As if He had said, 'Do not confer with flesh and blood, touching these things—with men void of spiritual discernment, the eyes of whose understanding God hath not opened—lest they and you perish together.' In the next verse He removes the two grand objections with which these wise fools meet us at every turn: 'These things are too grievous to be borne'; or, 'They are too high to be attained,'—saying, '"The disciple is not above his Master"', therefore, if I have suffered, be content to tread in My steps. And doubt ye not then, but I

24. The distinction between evil thoughts and evil tempers is a very fine one. An evil thought is a thought of sin dwelt upon and pondered over with pleasure; an evil temper is a desire to carry out in act the thought of sin. Thus, a man has injured me. I may allow myself to think with satisfaction of

some way of revenging myself upon him, though without any intention of actually doing so; that is an evil thought. Or I may plan some scheme of revenge with the desire and intention of executing it; that is an evil temper.

The passage quoted (Luke vi. 40) will not bear this exposition. The

will fulfil My word : " For every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." ' But his Master was free from all sinful tempers. So, therefore, is His disciple, even every real Christian.

25. Every one of these can say with St. Paul, ' I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live , yet not I, but Christ liveth in me,'—words that manifestly describe a deliverance from inward as well as from outward sin. This is expressed both negatively, *I live not* (my evil nature, the body of sin, is destroyed) ; and positively, *Christ liveth in me* , and, therefore, all that is holy, and just, and good. Indeed, both these, *Christ liveth in me*, and *I live not*, are inseparably connected , for ' what communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial ? '

26. He, therefore, who liveth in true believers hath ' purified their hearts by faith ' ; insomuch that every one that hath Christ in him, the hope of glory, ' purifieth himself, even as He is pure ' (1 John iii. 3). He is purified from pride ; for Christ was lowly of heart. He is pure from self-will or desire ; for Christ desired only to do the will of His Father, and to finish His work. And he is pure from anger, in the common sense of the word ; for Christ was meek and gentle, patient and long-suffering. I say, in the common sense of the word ; for all anger is not evil. We read of our Lord Himself (Mark iii. 5), that He once ' looked round with anger.' But with what kind of anger ? The next word shows, *συλλυπούμενος*, ' being,' at the same time, ' grieved for the hardness of their hearts.' So then He was angry at the sin, and in the same moment grieved for the sinners , angry or displeased at the offence, but sorry for the offenders. With anger, yea, hatred, He looked upon the thing ; with grief and love upon the persons. Go, thou that art perfect, and do likewise. Be

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word translated ' perfect ' is not the usual one (*τέλειος*), but *κατηρητισμένος*, which means ' fully equipped,' ' made master of his subject ' ; and the meaning of the whole passage is : ' The learner can never rise above his teacher ; even when he has finished his course of instruction, he

can only hope to be on the same level as his teacher.' Hence a blind teacher can only produce blind pupils. The disciples are therefore warned to be sure that they are fit to be teachers before they undertake to instruct others, and cast the motes out of their eyes.

thus angry, and thou sinnest not ; feeling a displacency at every offence against God, but only love and tender compassion to the offender.

27. Thus doth Jesus 'save His people from their sins' ; and not only from outward sins, but also from the sins of their hearts ; from evil thoughts, and from evil tempers. 'True,' say some, 'we shall thus be saved from our sins ; but not till death , not in this world.' But how are we to reconcile this with the express words of St. John ?—'Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement : because as He is, so are we in this world.' The Apostle here, beyond all contradiction, speaks of himself and other living Christians, of whom (as though he had foreseen this very evasion, and set himself to overturn it from the foundation) he flatly affirms, that not only at or after death, but *in this world*, they are as their Master (1 John iv. 17).

28. Exactly agreeable to this are his words in the first chapter of this Epistle (verse 5, &c.), 'God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, . . we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' And again : 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our

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27. But, as we have seen, Wesley came to think that the instant of entire sanctification was 'generally the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body.' If he meant by entire sanctification a state from which there is no possibility of falling, he was perhaps right ; but it is an unfortunate concession to his opponents, and has done much to discourage his followers from expecting full deliverance from sin in this life. The fact is, a man is at any moment fully sanctified, if he has full faith in Christ, and so realizes the presence of Christ in his heart by His Spirit ; and this will continue, as long as his faith remains fixed on his Saviour. Such happy

periods will at first be often interrupted by the failure of his faith ; but if he perseveres, they will become more and more habitual, until they are practically continuous ; though there will always remain until death the possibility of occasional lapses from the height which he has reached. So that it is not wise to speak of 'a sanctified state,' but rather of a present experience of sanctification. This is the peril of the view of sanctification as 'a second blessing' ; it is a blessing repeated not once or twice, but scores of times in the course of the Christian life ; and its first experience is very often at conversion, as Wesley practically admits in Sermon L, i. 4. 5.

sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' Now, it is evident, the Apostle here also speaks of a deliverance wrought *in this world*. For he saith not, The blood of Christ will cleanse at the hour of death, or in the day of judgement ; but, it 'cleanseth,' at the time present, 'us,' living Christians, 'from all sin.' And it is equally evident, that if *any sin* remain, we are not cleansed from *all sin* ; if *any* unrighteousness remain in the soul, it is not cleansed from *all* unrighteousness. Neither let any sinner against his own soul say, that this relates to justification only, or the cleansing us from the guilt of sin ; first, because this is confounding together what the Apostle clearly distinguishes, who mentions first, *to forgive us our sins*, and then *to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Secondly, because this is asserting justification by works, in the strongest sense possible ; it is making all inward as well as outward holiness necessarily previous to justification. For if the cleansing here spoken of is no other than the cleansing us from the guilt of sin, then we are not cleansed from guilt, that is, are not justified, unless on condition of 'walking in the light, as He is in the light.' It remains, then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness, that they are now in such a sense perfect, as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.

29. Thus hath the Lord fulfilled the things He spake by His holy prophets, which have been since the world began,—by Moses in particular, saying (Deut. xxx. 6), I 'will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul' ; by David, crying out, 'Creaté in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me' ; and most remarkably by Ezekiel, in those words, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean : from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, . . . and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgements, and do them. . . . Ye shall be My people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses. . . Thus saith the Lord

God : In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, the Heathen shall know that I the Lord build the ruined places ; . I the Lord have spoken it, and I will do it ' (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.).

30. ' Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved,' both in the law and in the prophets, and having the prophetic word confirmed unto us in the gospel, by our blessed Lord and His Apostles, ' let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' ' Let us fear, lest ' so many ' promises being made us of entering into His rest,' which he that hath entered into has ceased from his own works, ' any of us should come short of it.' ' This one thing let us do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus ' ; crying unto Him day and night, till we also are ' delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God ' !

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## THE PROMISE OF SANCTIFICATION

(Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.)

BY THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY

1 God of all power, and truth, and grace,  
Which shall from age to age endure ;  
Whose word, when heaven and earth shall pass,  
Remains, and stands for ever sure.

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The appended hymn, by Charles Wesley, was reprinted in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1742), with the following alterations :

v. 10, l. 1 : ' my carnal mind ' is altered to ' *the* carnal mind.'

v. 17, l. 1 : ' old ' is altered to ' *deep*.'

v. 19, l. 3 : ' the corn, the living bread ' is altered to ' the *never-failing* bread.'

v. 22, l. 4 : ' the ' is altered to ' *thy*.'

v. 28, l. 3 : ' my ' is altered to ' *Thy*.'

It was printed by Fletcher at the end of his *Last Check to Antinomianism* ; and verses 1, 3, 7, 8, and 14 are Hymn 548, and verses 23, 26, 27, and 28 Hymn 549 in the present Methodist Hymn-Book.

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- 2 Calmly to Thee my soul looks up,  
And waits Thy promises to prove ;  
The object of my steadfast hope,  
The seal of Thine eternal love.
- 3 That I Thy mercy may proclaim,  
That all mankind Thy truth may see,  
Hallow Thy great and glorious name,  
And perfect holiness in me.
- 4 Chose from the world if now I stand,  
Adorn'd in righteousness divine ;  
If, brought unto the promised land,  
I justly call the Saviour mine ;
- 5 Perform the work Thou hast begun,  
My inmost soul to Thee convert :  
Love me, for ever love Thine own,  
And sprinkle with Thy blood my heart.
- 6 Thy sanctifying Spirit pour,  
To quench my thirst and wash me clean :  
Now, Father, let the gracious shower  
Descend, and make me pure from sin.
- 7 Purge me from every sinful blot ;  
My idols all be cast aside ;  
Cleanse me from every evil thought,  
From all the filth of self and pride.
- 8 Give me a new, a perfect heart,  
From doubt, and fear, and sorrow free ;  
The mind which was in Christ impart,  
And let my spirit cleave to Thee.
- 9 O take this heart of stone away !  
(Thy rule it doth not, cannot own ;)  
In me no longer let it stay :  
O take away this heart of stone !
- 10 The hatred of my carnal mind  
Out of my flesh at once remove ;  
Give me a tender heart, resign'd,  
And pure, and fill'd with faith and love.

- 11 Within me Thy good Spirit place,  
Spirit of health, and love, and power ;  
Plant in me Thy victorious grace,  
And sin shall never enter more.
- 12 Cause me to walk in Christ my way,  
And I Thy statutes shall fulfil ;  
In every point Thy law obey,  
And perfectly perform Thy will.
- 13 Hast Thou not said, who canst not lie,  
That I Thy law shall keep and do ?  
Lord, I believe, though men deny :  
They all are false ; but Thou art true.
- 14 O that I now, from sin released,  
Thy word might to the utmost prove !  
Enter into the promised rest,  
The Canaan of Thy perfect love !
- 15 There let me ever, ever dwell ;  
Be Thou my God, and I will be  
Thy servant ! O set to Thy seal !  
Give me eternal life in Thee.
- 16 From all remaining filth within  
Let me in Thee salvation have :  
From actual and from inbred sin,  
My ransom'd soul persist to save.
- 17 Wash out my old original stain ;  
Tell me no more it cannot be,  
Demons or men ! The Lamb was slain,  
His blood was all pour'd out for me !
- 18 Sprinkle it, Jesu, on my heart :  
One drop of Thy all-cleansing blood  
Shall make my sinfulness depart,  
And fill me with the life of God.
- 19 Father, supply my every need ;  
Sustain the life Thyself hast given ;  
Call for the corn, the living bread,  
The manna that comes down from heaven.

- 20 The gracious fruits of righteousness,  
Thy blessings' unexhausted store,  
In me abundantly increase ;  
Nor let me ever hunger more.
- 21 Let me no more, in deep complaint,  
' My leanness, O my leanness ! ' cry ;  
Alone consumed with pining want,  
Of all my Father's children I !
- 22 The painful thirst, the fond desire,  
Thy joyous presence shall remove ;  
While my full soul doth still require  
The whole eternity of love.
- 23 Holy, and true, and righteous Lord,  
I wait to prove Thy perfect will !  
Be mindful of Thy gracious word,  
And stamp me with Thy Spirit's seal.
- 24 Thy faithful mercies let me find,  
In which Thou causest me to trust ;  
Give me Thy meek and lowly mind,  
And lay my spirit in the dust.
- 25 Show me how foul my heart hath been,  
When all renew'd by grace I am :  
When Thou hast emptied me of sin,  
Show me the fullness of my shame.
- 26 Open my faith's interior eye,  
Display Thy glory from above ;  
And all I am shall sink and die,  
Lost in astonishment and love.
- 27 Confound, o'erpower me, with Thy grace ;  
I would be by myself abhorr'd ;  
(All might, all majesty, all praise,  
All glory be to Christ my Lord !)
- 28 Now let me gain perfection's height !  
Now let me into nothing fall !  
Be less than nothing in my sight,  
And feel that Christ is all in all !

## SERMON XXXVI

### WANDERING THOUGHTS

THIS sermon has had a curious history. It was not included in Vol. III of the sermons published in 1750 by W. Strahan ; but it first appeared in an undated edition of the volume published by William Pine of Bristol, and it was retained in the same place in the edition of the *Works* of 1771, and in the eight-volume edition of the Sermons of 1787-8, which did not include the other sermons added to the first four volumes in the 1771 edition. It has been legally decided that it is one of the Standard Sermons (see below, p. 340). The date of the volume in which it first appeared can be pretty closely determined from three independent considerations : (1) In paragraph 4 two lines are quoted from a hymn of Charles Wesley's, first published in *Hymns of Intercession* in 1758. (2) It is recorded to have been preached twice and twice only in the Sermon Register, on November 30, 1760, at Spitalfields, and on January 1, 1761, at West Street. Just in the same way Sermon XXXIV, on The Catholic Spirit, was preached twice, in September and November 1749, before being published in 1750. It looks as if Wesley wanted to try the sermon over a time or two before making his final revision for the press. This would make the date of publication 1761. (3) William Pine, a Bristol Methodist, began publishing for Wesley in 1760. The fourth volume of the sermons was published in that year in two editions, though they are not numbered as first and second : the first impression was published by J. Grabham, the second by J. Grabham and W. Pine in Wine Street, as if Pine had joined Grabham during the year ; and in 1761 Pine's name alone appears as the publisher of the tenth extract from the *Journal*. From that time until 1775 he did all Wesley's Bristol publishing, but then they quarrelled on account of Pine's strong and, as Wesley thought, disloyal sympathy with the Americans. Hence 1761 would be about the earliest date possible for the undated edition of Vol. III of the Sermons.

There is no record in Green's *Bibliography* of any separate edition of this sermon ; but the Wesleyan Conference Office Library possesses five eighteenth-century editions (the first of which is dated 1762), and we have in our Queen's College Library one published by Story in 1808.

Its object is clear. One of the charges made against Wesley just at this time was that he made 'the way to heaven much more narrow and difficult than either Jesus Christ or His Apostles have made it requiring such degrees of perfection as are not in the power of human nature, in its present state of infirmity, to attain to' (Clark's *Montanus Redivivus*, 1760). In the sermon on Christian Perfection, and in many others, he taught that entirely sanctified Christians are 'freed from evil thoughts'; and though he is careful to explain that no thought is evil until it is welcomed and entertained, the phrase might well lead a man of tender conscience to doubt as to his entire salvation, if any thoughts of evil ever came into his mind. Here Wesley shows that a large class of what he calls 'wandering thoughts' are not sinful, and need not cause the believer any concern or self-condemnation; a most salutary lesson.

In *Minutes*, 1766, it is directed that this sermon should be 'carefully dispersed' by the assistants.

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*Bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.—*

2 COR. X. 5.

1. BUT will God so 'bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,' that no wandering thought will find a place in the mind, even while we remain in the body? So some have vehemently maintained; yea, have affirmed that none are perfected in love unless they are so far perfected in understanding, that all wandering thoughts are done away, unless not only every affection and temper be holy and just and good, but every individual thought which arises in the mind be wise and regular.

2. This is a question of no small importance. For how many of those who fear God, yea, and love Him, perhaps with all their heart, have been greatly distressed on this account! How many, by not understanding it right, have not only been distressed, but greatly hurt in their souls; cast into unprofitable, yea, mischievous reasonings, such as slackened their motion towards God, and weakened them in running the race set before them! Nay, many, through misapprehensions of this very thing, have cast away the precious gift of God. They have been induced, first to doubt of, and then to deny, the work God had wrought in their souls; and hereby have

grieved the Spirit of God, till He withdrew and left them in utter darkness !

3. How is it then, that amidst the abundance of books which have been lately published almost on all subjects, we should have none upon wandering thoughts ? at least none that will at all satisfy a calm and serious mind ? In order to do this in some degree, I purpose to inquire,—

I. WHAT ARE THE SEVERAL SORTS OF WANDERING THOUGHTS ?

II. WHAT ARE THE GENERAL OCCASIONS OF THEM ?

III. WHICH OF THEM ARE SINFUL, AND WHICH NOT ?

IV WHICH OF THEM WE MAY EXPECT AND PRAY TO BE DELIVERED FROM ?

I. 1. I purpose to inquire, first, What are the several sorts of wandering thoughts ? The particular sorts are innumerable ; but, in general, they are of two sorts : thoughts that wander from God ; and thoughts that wander from the particular point we have in hand.

2. With regard to the former, all our thoughts are naturally of this kind : for they are continually wandering from God we think nothing about Him God is not in all our thoughts we are, one and all, as the Apostle observes, ‘ without God in the world.’ We think of what we love ; but we do not love God, therefore, we think not of Him. Or, if we are now and then constrained to think of Him for a time, yet as we have no pleasure therein, nay, rather, as these thoughts are not only insipid, but distasteful and irksome to us, we drive them out as soon as we can, and return to what we love to think of. So that the world, and the things of the world—what we shall eat, what we shall drink, what we shall put on ; what we shall see, what we shall hear, what we shall gain ; how we shall please our senses or our imagination—takes up all our time, and engrosses all our thought. So long

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I. par. 1. The proper meaning of ‘wandering thoughts’ is thoughts that wander from the point in hand ; the extension of the phrase to include thoughts that wander from God is hardly justifiable.

therefore, as we love the world, that is, so long as we are in our natural state; all our thoughts, from morning to evening, and from evening to morning, are no other than wandering thoughts.

3. But many times we are not only 'without God in the world,' but also fighting against Him, as there is in every man by nature a 'carnal mind which is enmity against God': no wonder, therefore, that men abound with unbelieving thoughts, either saying in their hearts, 'There is no God,' or questioning, if not denying, His power or wisdom, His mercy, or justice, or holiness. No wonder that they so often doubt of His providence, at least, of its extending to all events; or that, even though they allow it, they still entertain murmuring or repining thoughts. Nearly related to these, and frequently connected with them, are proud and vain imaginations. Again: sometimes they are taken up with angry, malicious, or revengeful thoughts; at other times, with airy scenes of pleasure, whether of sense or imagination; whereby the earthy, sensual mind becomes more earthy and sensual still. Now by all these they make flat war with God: these are wandering thoughts of the highest kind.

4. Widely different from these are the other sort of wandering thoughts; in which the heart does not wander from God, but the understanding wanders from the particular point it had then in view. For instance: I sit down to consider those words in the verse preceding the text: 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.' I think, 'This ought to be the case with all that are called Christians. But how far is it otherwise! Look round into almost every part of what is termed "the Christian world." What manner of weapons are these using? In what kind of warfare are they engaged,—

While men, like fiends, each other tear,  
In all the hellish rage of war?

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3. 'Highest'; i.e. most serious; as in the phrase, 'high crimes and misdemeanours.'

4. The lines are quoted from Hymn

2, 'For Peace,' in Charles Wesley's *Hymns of Intercession for all Mankind*, published in 1758. It is Hymn 442 in the Methodist Hymn-

See how *these* Christians love one another! Wherein are they preferable to Turks and Pagans? What abomination can be found among Mahometans or Heathens which is not found among Christians also?' And thus my mind runs off, before I am aware, from one circumstance to another. Now, all these are, in some sense, wandering thoughts: for although they do not wander from God, much less fight against Him, yet they do wander from the particular point I had in view.

II. Such is the nature, such are the sorts (to speak rather usefully, than philosophically) of wandering thoughts. But what are the general occasions of them? This we are, in the second place, to consider.

I. And it is easy to observe, that the occasions of the former sort of thoughts, which oppose or wander from God, are, in general, sinful tempers. For instance: why is not God in all the thoughts, in any of the thoughts, of a natural man? For a plain reason: be he rich or poor, learned or unlearned, he is an Atheist (though not vulgarly so called); he neither knows nor loves God. Why are his thoughts continually wandering after the world? Because he is an idolater. He does not indeed worship an image, or bow down to the stock of a tree, yet is he sunk into equally damnable idolatry: he loves, that is, worships, the world. He seeks happiness in the things that are seen, in the pleasures that perish in the using. Why is it that his thoughts are perpetually wandering from the very end of his being, the knowledge of God in Christ? Because he is an unbeliever; because he has

Book of 1876, but is omitted in the present Hymn-Book. The original reads "Where men, like fiends," &c. The reference is to the Seven Years' War, which was ended in 1763; England in alliance with Frederick the Great of Prussia was fighting against France, Austria, and Russia, both by land and sea, not only in Europe, but also in Canada and India.

II. 1. An atheist is properly one who denies the existence of God; but it is often used, as here, of those who practically fail to acknowledge God. Thus Hare, in *Guesses*, Sermon I, says: 'Practically every man is an atheist who lives without God in the world.' Wesley similarly extends the meaning of 'idolater'; but it may be doubted whether this calling of names does much good.

no faith ; or, at least, no more than a devil. So all these wandering thoughts easily and naturally spring from that evil root of unbelief.

2. The case is the same in other instances : pride, anger, revenge, vanity, lust, covetousness—every one of them occasions thoughts suitable to its own nature. And so does every sinful temper of which the human mind is capable. The particulars it is hardly possible, nor is it needful, to enumerate : it suffices to observe, that as many evil tempers as find a place in any soul, so many ways that soul will depart from God, by the worst kind of wandering thoughts.

3. The occasions of the latter kind of wandering thoughts are exceeding various. Multitudes of them are occasioned by the natural union between the soul and body. How immediately and how deeply is the understanding affected by a diseased body ! Let but the blood move irregularly in the brain, and all regular thinking is at an end. Raging madness ensues, and then farewell to all evenness of thought. Yea, let only the spirits be hurried or agitated to a certain degree, and a temporary madness, a delirium, prevents all settled thought. And is not the same irregularity of thought, in a measure, occasioned by every nervous disorder ? So does ‘ the corruptible body press down the soul, and cause it to muse about many things.’

4. But does it only cause this in the time of sickness or preternatural disorder ? Nay, but more or less, at all times, even in a state of perfect health. Let a man be ever so healthy, he will be more or less delirious every four-and-twenty hours. For does he not sleep ? And while he sleeps, is he not liable

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3. ‘ The spirits.’ Here, and in iii. 5, Wesley speaks in harmony with the theory that the body and blood were permeated by three highly refined fluids, distinguished as the natural, animal, and vital spirits, emanating respectively from the liver, the brain, and the heart. Though the theory has been discarded, the use of the word is still affected by it, as when we speak of low

spirits, high spirits, drooping spirits, and the like. See above, vol. i. p. 504.

‘ The corruptible body,’ &c. ; quoted from Wisdom ix. 15.

4. ‘ Delirious ’ : an unwarranted extension of the meaning of the word. Delirium is a condition of incoherence produced by disease or madness ; not properly applicable to the condition of sleep.

to dream? And who then is master of his own thoughts, or able to preserve the order and consistency of them? Who can then keep them fixed to any one point, or prevent their wandering from pole to pole?

5. But suppose we are awake, are we always so awake that we can steadily govern our thoughts? Are we not unavoidably exposed to contrary extremes, by the very nature of this machine, the body? Sometimes we are too heavy, too dull and languid, to pursue any chain of thought. Sometimes, on the other hand, we are too lively. The imagination, without leave, starts to and fro, and carries us away hither and thither, whether we will or no; and all this from the merely natural motion of the spirits, or vibration of the nerves.

6. Farther: How many wanderings of thought may arise from those various associations of our ideas which are made entirely without our knowledge, and independently on our choice! How these connexions are formed, we cannot tell; but they are formed in a thousand different manners. Nor is it in the power of the wisest or holiest of men to break those associations, or prevent what is the necessary consequence of them, and matter of daily observation. Let the fire but touch one end of the train, and it immediately runs on to the other.

7. Once more: Let us fix our attention as studiously as we are able on any subject, yet let either pleasure or pain arise,

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5. 'Vibration of the nerves.' The theory of the propagation of impulses along the nerves by vibrations is due to Dr. David Hartley, who published it in his *Observations on Man* in 1749. Wesley read his work, and criticizes it in *Thoughts on Necessity* (1774).

6. 'Association of ideas.' The phrase is due to John Locke, who deals with the subject under this title in *Human Understanding*, ii. 33. His theory was developed by Hartley, Hume, James Mill, John Stuart

Mill, and Herbert Spencer, who are often distinguished as the Associationist School. Similarity, Contiguity, and Contrast may each be the cause of association. Wesley read Locke's *Essay* 'on the road' to Pembroke in 1781, and wrote a criticism on it, in which he commends it as 'a deep, solid, weighty treatise,' but condemns his view of personality, and especially his treatment of the Aristotelian Logic, of which he charges him with 'total ignorance'!

especially if it be intense, and it will demand our immediate attention, and attach our thought to itself. It will interrupt the steadiest contemplation, and divert the mind from its favourite subject.

8. These occasions of wandering thoughts lie within, are wrought into our very nature. But they will likewise naturally and necessarily arise from the various impulse of outward objects. Whatever strikes upon the organ of sense, the eye or ear, will raise a perception in the mind. And, accordingly, whatever we see or hear will break in upon our former train of thought. Every man, therefore, that does anything in our sight, or speaks anything in our hearing, occasions our mind to wander, more or less, from the point it was thinking of before.

9. And there is no question but those evil spirits who are continually seeking whom they may devour make use of all the foregoing occasions to hurry and distract our minds. Sometimes by one, sometimes by another of these means, they will harass and perplex us, and, so far as God permits, interrupt our thoughts, particularly when they are engaged on the best subjects. Nor is this at all strange : they well understand the very springs of thought ; and know on which of the bodily organs the imagination, the understanding, and every other faculty of the mind more immediately depends. And hereby they know how, by affecting those organs, to affect the operations dependent on them. Add to this, that they can inject a thousand thoughts, without any of the preceding means ; it being as natural for spirit to act upon spirit, as for matter to act upon matter. These things being considered, we cannot [wonder] that our thought so often wanders from any point which we have in view.

III. 1. What kind of wandering thoughts are sinful, and what not, is the third thing to be inquired into. And, first, all those thoughts which wander from God, which leave Him no room in our minds, are undoubtedly sinful. For all these imply practical Atheism, and by these we are without God in the world. And so much more are all those which are

contrary to God, which imply opposition or enmity to Him. Such are all murmuring, discontented thoughts, which say, in effect, 'We will not have Thee to rule over us'; all unbelieving thoughts, whether with regard to His being, His attributes, or His providence. I mean, His particular providence over all things, as well as all persons, in the universe; that without which 'not a sparrow falls to the ground,' by which 'the hairs of our head are all numbered'; for as to a general providence (vulgarly so called), contradistinguished from a particular, it is only a decent, well-sounding word, which means just nothing.

2. Again: All thoughts which spring from sinful tempers are undoubtedly sinful. Such, for instance, are those that spring from a revengeful temper, from pride, or lust, or vanity. 'An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit': therefore, if the tree be evil, so must the fruit be also.

3. And so must those be which either produce or feed any sinful temper; those which either give rise to pride or vanity, to anger or love of the world, or confirm and increase these or any other unholy temper, passion, or affection. For not only whatever flows from evil is evil; but also whatever leads to it, whatever tends to alienate the soul from God, and to make or keep it earthly, sensual, and devilish.

4. Hence, even those thoughts which are occasioned by weakness or disease, by the natural mechanism of the body, or by the laws of vital union, however innocent they may be in themselves, do nevertheless become sinful, when they either produce or cherish and increase in us any sinful temper; suppose the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life. In like manner, the wandering thoughts, which are occasioned by the words or actions of other men, if they cause or feed any wrong disposition, then commence sinful. And the same we may observe of those which are suggested or injected by the devil. When they minister to any earthly or devilish temper (which they do, whenever we give place to

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III. 1. 'General providence.' See note on Sermon XXXII, 28, and Sermon LXVII.

them, and thereby make them our own), then they are equally sinful with the tempers to which they minister.

5. But, abstracting from these cases, wandering thoughts, in the latter sense of the word, that is, thoughts wherein our understanding wanders from the point it has in view, are no more sinful than the motion of the blood in our veins, or of the spirits in our brain. If they arise from an infirm constitution, or from some accidental weakness or distemper, they are as innocent as it is to have a weak constitution or a distempered body. And surely no one doubts but a bad state of nerves, a fever of any kind, and either a transient or a lasting delirium, may consist with perfect innocence. And if they should arise in a soul which is united to a healthful body, either from the natural union between the body and soul, or from any of ten thousand changes which may occur in those organs of the body that minister to thought,—in any of these cases they are as perfectly innocent as the causes from which they spring. And so they are when they spring from the casual, involuntary associations of our ideas.

6. If our thoughts wander from the point we had in view, by means of other men variously affecting our senses, they are equally innocent still: for it is no more a sin to understand what I see and hear, and in many cases cannot help seeing, hearing, and understanding, than it is to have eyes and ears. ‘But if the devil injects wandering thoughts, are not those thoughts evil?’ They are troublesome, and in that sense evil, but they are not sinful. I do not know that he spoke to our Lord with an audible voice, perhaps he spoke to His heart only, when he said, ‘All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.’ But whether he spoke inwardly or outwardly, our Lord doubtless understood what he said. He had therefore a thought correspondent to those words. But was it a sinful thought? We know it was not. In Him was no sin, either in action, or

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6. It is pretty clear that Wesley did not accept with complete confidence the crude notion that the Tempter appeared in visible form to

our Lord; although in his note on Matt. iv. 3 he says: ‘Coming to Him—in a visible form; probably in a human shape.’

word, or thought. Nor is there any sin in a thousand thoughts of the same kind, which Satan may inject into any of our Lord's followers.

7. It follows, that none of these wandering thoughts (whatever unwary persons have affirmed, thereby grieving whom the Lord had not grieved) are inconsistent with perfect love. Indeed, if they were, then not only sharp pain, but sleep itself, would be inconsistent with it. Sharp pain, for whenever this supervenes, whatever we were before thinking of, it will interrupt our thinking, and of course draw our thoughts into another channel. Yea, and sleep itself; as it is a state of insensibility and stupidity; and such as is generally mixed with thoughts wandering over the earth, loose, wild, and incoherent. Yet certainly these are consistent with perfect love: so then are all wandering thoughts of this kind.

IV 1. From what has been observed, it is easy to give a clear answer to the last question, What kind of wandering thoughts we may expect and pray to be delivered from.

From the former sort of wandering thoughts—those wherein the heart wanders from God; from all that are contrary to His will, or that leave us without God in the world—every one that is perfected in love is unquestionably delivered. This deliverance, therefore, we may expect, this we may, we ought to pray for. Wandering thoughts of this kind imply unbelief, if not enmity against God, but both of these He will destroy, will bring utterly to an end. And indeed, from all sinful wandering thoughts we shall be absolutely delivered. All that are perfected in love are delivered from these, else they were not saved from sin. Men and devils will tempt them all manner of ways; but they cannot prevail over them.

2. With regard to the latter sort of wandering thoughts, the case is widely different. Till the cause is removed, we cannot in reason expect the effect should cease. But the causes or occasions of these will remain as long as we remain in the body. So long, therefore, we have all reason to believe the effects will remain also.

3. To be more particular : Suppose a soul, however holy, to dwell in a distempered body ; suppose the brain be so thoroughly disordered, as that raging madness follows ; will not all the thoughts be wild and unconnected as long as that disorder continues ? Suppose a fever occasions that temporary madness which we term ' a delirium ' ; can there be any just connexion of thought till that delirium is removed ? Yea, suppose what is called ' a nervous disorder ' to rise to so high a degree as to occasion at least a partial madness ; will there not be a thousand wandering thoughts ? And must not these irregular thoughts continue as long as the disorder which occasions them ?

4. Will not the case be the same with regard to those thoughts that necessarily arise from violent pain ? They will more or less continue, while that pain continues, by the inviolable order of nature. This order, likewise, will obtain, where the thoughts are disturbed, broken, or interrupted, by any defect of the apprehension, judgement, or imagination, flowing from the natural constitution of the body. And how many interruptions may spring from the unaccountable and involuntary association of our ideas ! Now, all these are directly or indirectly caused by the corruptible body pressing down the mind. Nor, therefore, can we expect them to be removed till ' this corruptible shall put on incorruption.'

5. And then only, when we lie down in the dust, shall we be delivered from those wandering thoughts which are occasioned by what we see and hear, among those by whom we are now surrounded. To avoid these, we must go out of the world for as long as we remain therein, as long as there are men and women round about us, and we have eyes to see, and ears to hear, the things which we daily see and hear will certainly affect our mind, and will more or less break in upon and interrupt our preceding thoughts.

6. And as long as evil spirits roam to and fro in a miserable, disordered world, so long they will assault (whether they can prevail or no) every inhabitant of flesh and blood. They will trouble even those whom they cannot destroy : they will attack, if they cannot conquer. And from these attacks of

our restless, unwearied enemies, we must not look for an entire deliverance, till we are lodged 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.'

7. To sum up the whole: To expect deliverance from those wandering thoughts which are occasioned by evil spirits is to expect that the devil should die or fall asleep, or, at least, should no more go about as a roaring lion. To expect deliverance from those which are occasioned by other men is to expect either that men should cease from the earth, or that we should be absolutely secluded from them, and have no intercourse with them, or that having eyes we should not see, neither hear with our ears, but be as senseless as stocks or stones. And to pray for deliverance from those which are occasioned by the body is, in effect, to pray that we may leave the body otherwise it is praying for impossibilities and absurdities; praying that God would reconcile contradictions, by continuing our union with a corruptible body without the natural, necessary consequences of that union. It is as if we should pray to be angels and men, mortal and immortal, at the same time. Nay!—but when that which is immortal is come, mortality is done away.

8. Rather let us pray, both with the spirit and with the understanding, that all these things may work together for our good; that we may suffer all the infirmities of our nature, all the interruptions of men, all the assaults and suggestions of evil spirits, and in all be 'more than conquerors.' Let us pray, that we may be delivered from all sin, that both root and branch may be destroyed; that we may be 'cleansed from all pollution of flesh and spirit,' from every evil temper, and word, and work; that we may 'love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength'; that all the fruit of the Spirit may be found in us—not only love, joy, peace, but also 'long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance.' Pray that all these things may flourish and abound, may increase in you more and more, till an abundant entrance be ministered unto you, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ!

## SERMON XXXVII

### SATAN'S DEVICES

THIS sermon, like the last, was intended to guard the preaching of entire sanctification from certain misunderstandings and dangers which had arisen in the Societies. It was apparently written for publication ; I find no record of its having been actually preached. It is based on the *Minutes* of June 17, 1747, the relevant portions of which will be the best introduction to it.

Q. 2. What do we allow them (i.e. the brethren who differ from us with regard to entire sanctification) ?

A. We grant, 1. That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not sanctified throughout . till a little before death ;

2. That the term sanctified is continually applied by St. Paul to all that were justified.

3. That by this term alone he rarely (if ever) means saved from all sin ;

4. That consequently it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word ' wholly,' ' entirely,' or the like ;

5. That the inspired writers almost continually speak of or to those who were justified ; but very rarely, either of or to those who were wholly sanctified ;

6. That, consequently, it behoves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of justification ; but more rarely concerning entire sanctification.

Q. 16. Does not the harshly preaching perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage or slavish fear ?

A. It does. Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy, and desire.

Q. 17. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith even till we are made perfect ?

A. Why indeed ? Since holy grief does not quench this joy.

Q. 18. Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore ?

A. We ought not so to do. Let them all their life long rejoice unto God, so it be with reverence. And even if lightness or pride should mix with their joy, let us not strike at the joy itself but at that lightness or pride.

Q. 19. Ought we to be anxiously careful about perfection ? Lest we should die before we have attained ?

A. In no wise. We ought to be thus careful for nothing, neither spiritual nor temporal.

Q. 20. But ought we not to be troubled, on account of the sinful nature which still remains in us ?

A. It is good for us to have a deep sense of this, and to be much ashamed before the Lord. But this should only incite us the more earnestly to turn unto Christ every moment. And therefore, when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of His love should much more abound.

Q. 22. Is not the teaching believers to be continually poring upon their inbred sin the ready way to make them forget that they were purged from their former sins ?

A. We find by experience it is ; or to make them undervalue, and account it a little thing ; whereas indeed (though there are still greater gifts behind) this is inexpressibly great and glorious.

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*We are not ignorant of his devices.*—2 COR. ii. 11.

1. THE devices whereby the subtle god of this world labours to destroy the children of God—or at least to torment whom he cannot destroy, to perplex and hinder them in running the race which is set before them—are numberless as the stars of heaven, or the sand upon the sea-shore. But it is of one of them only that I now propose to speak (although exerted in various ways), whereby he endeavours to divide the gospel against itself, and by one part of it to overthrow the other.

2. The inward kingdom of heaven, which is set up in the hearts of all that repent and believe the gospel, is no other than ‘ righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.’ Every babe in Christ knows we are made partakers of these, the very hour that we believe in Jesus. But these are only the first-fruits of His Spirit, the harvest is not yet. Although these blessings are inconceivably great, yet we trust to see greater than these. We trust to love the Lord our God, not only as we do now, with a weak, though sincere affection, but ‘ with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, and with all our strength.’ We look for power to ‘ rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks ’ ; knowing, ‘ this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning us.’

3. We expect to be ‘ made perfect in love ’ ; in that which

casts out all painful fear, and all desire but that of glorifying Him we love, and of loving and serving Him more and more. We look for such an increase in the experimental knowledge and love of God our Saviour, as will enable us always 'to walk in the light as He is in the light.' We believe the whole mind will be in us 'which was also in Christ Jesus', that we shall love every man so as to be ready to lay down our life for his sake, so as, by this love, to be freed from anger, and pride, and from every unkind affection. We expect to be 'cleansed from all our idols,' 'from all filthiness,' whether 'of flesh or spirit'; to be 'saved from all our uncleannesses,' inward or outward; to be purified 'as He is pure.'

4. We trust in His promise who cannot lie, that the time will surely come, when, in every word and work, we shall do His blessed will on earth, as it is done in heaven, when all our conversation shall be seasoned with salt, all meet to minister grace to the hearers, when, whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, it shall be done to the glory of God, when all our words and deeds shall be 'in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God, even the Father, through Him.'

5. Now this is the grand device of Satan, to destroy the first work of God in the soul, or at least to hinder its increase, by our expectation of that greater work. It is therefore my present design, first, to point out the several ways whereby he endeavours this: and, secondly, to observe how we may retort these fiery darts of the wicked one: how we may rise the higher, by what he intends for an occasion of our falling.

I. 1. I am, first, to point out the several ways whereby Satan endeavours to destroy the first work of God in the soul, or at least to hinder its increase, by our expectation of that greater work. And, 1. He endeavours to damp our joy in the Lord, by the consideration of our own vileness, sinfulness, unworthiness; added to this, that there must be a far greater change than is yet, or we cannot see the Lord. If we knew we must remain as we are, even to the day of our death, we might

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Par. 5. 'Retort'; i.e. hurl back.

possibly draw a kind of comfort, poor as it was, from that necessity. But as we know we need not remain in this state, as we are assured there is a greater change to come, and that unless sin be all done away in this life, we cannot see God in glory, that subtle adversary often damps the joy we should otherwise feel in what we have already attained, by a perverse representation of what we have not attained, and the absolute necessity of attaining it. So that we cannot rejoice in what we have, because there is more which we have not. We cannot rightly taste the goodness of God, who hath done so great things for us, because there are so much greater things which, as yet, He hath not done. Likewise, the deeper conviction God works in us of our present unholiness, and the more vehement desire we feel in our heart of the entire holiness He hath promised, the more are we tempted to think lightly of the present gifts of God, and to undervalue what we have already received, because of what we have not received.

2. If he can prevail thus far, if he can damp our joy, he will soon attack our peace also. He will suggest, 'Are you fit to see God? He is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. How, then, can you flatter yourself, so as to imagine He beholds you with approbation? God is holy : you are unholy. What communion hath light with darkness? How is it possible that you, unclean as you are, should be in a state of acceptance with God? You see indeed the mark, the prize of your high calling ; but do you not see it is afar off? How can you presume, then, to think that all your sins are already blotted out? How can this be, until you are brought nearer to God, until you bear more resemblance to Him?' Thus will he endeavour not only to shake your peace, but even to overturn the very foundation of it, to bring you back, by insensible degrees, to the point from whence you set out first, even to seek for justification by works, or by your own righteousness,—to make something in you the ground of your acceptance, or, at least, necessarily previous to it.

3. Or, if we hold fast, 'Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ'; and, 'I am justified freely by God's grace, through the redemption which

is in Jesus ' ; yet he will not cease to urge, ' But the tree is known by its fruits and have you the fruits of justification ? Is that mind in you which was in Christ Jesus ? Are you dead unto sin, and alive unto righteousness ? Are you made conformable to the death of Christ, and do you know the power of His resurrection ? ' And then, comparing the small fruits we feel in our souls with the fullness of the promises, we shall be ready to conclude, ' Surely God hath not said that my sins are forgiven me ! Surely I have not received the remission of my sins ; for what lot have I among them that are sanctified ? '

4. More especially in the time of sickness and pain, he will press this with all his might ' Is it not the word of Him that cannot lie, " Without holiness no man shall see the Lord " ? But you are not holy, you know it well, you know holiness is the full image of God ; and how far is this above, out of your sight ? You cannot attain unto it. Therefore, all your labour has been in vain. All these things you have suffered in vain. You have spent your strength for nought. You are yet in your sins, and must therefore perish at the last.' And thus, if your eye be not steadily fixed on Him who hath borne all your sins, he will bring you again under that ' fear of death,' whereby you was so long ' subject unto bondage,' and, by this means, impair, if not wholly destroy, your peace, as well as joy in the Lord.

5. But his masterpiece of subtilty is still behind. Not content to strike at your peace and joy, he will carry his attempts farther yet : he will level his assault against your righteousness also. He will endeavour to shake, yea, if it be possible, to destroy, the holiness you have already received, by your very expectation of receiving more, of attaining all the image of God.

6. The manner wherein he attempts this may partly appear from what has been already observed. For, first, by striking at our joy in the Lord, he strikes likewise at our holiness : seeing joy in the Holy Ghost is a precious means of promoting every holy temper, a choice instrument of God, whereby He carries on much of His work in a believing

soul. And it is a considerable help, not only to inward, but also to outward, holiness. It strengthens our hands to go on in the work of faith, and in the labour of love ; manfully to 'fight the good fight of faith, and to lay hold on eternal life.' It is peculiarly designed of God to be a balance both against inward and outward sufferings, to 'lift up the hands that hang down, and confirm the feeble knees.' Consequently, whatever damps our joy in the Lord, proportionably obstructs our holiness. And therefore, so far as Satan shakes our joy, he hinders our holiness also.

7. The same effect will ensue, if he can, by any means, either destroy or shake our peace. For the peace of God is another precious means of advancing the image of God in us. There is scarce a greater help to holiness than this, a continual tranquillity of spirit, the evenness of a mind stayed upon God, a calm repose in the blood of Jesus. And without this, it is scarce possible to 'grow in grace,' and in the vital 'knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.' For all fear (unless the tender, filial fear) freezes and benumbs the soul. It binds up all the springs of spiritual life, and stops all motion of the heart toward God. And doubt, as it were, bemires the soul, so that it sticks fast in the deep clay. Therefore, in the same proportion as either of these prevail, our growth in holiness is hindered.

8. At the same time that our wise adversary endeavours to make our conviction of the necessity of perfect love an occasion of shaking our peace by doubts and fears, he endeavours to weaken, if not destroy, our faith. Indeed these are inseparably connected, so that they must stand or fall together. So long as faith subsists, we remain in peace ; our heart stands fast, while it believes in the Lord. But if we let go our faith, our filial confidence in a loving, pardoning God, our peace is at an end, the very foundation on which it stood being overthrown. And this is the only foundation of holiness, as well as of peace ; consequently, whatever strikes at this, strikes at

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I. 6. This is psychologically most sound. Joy is at once the result and the cause of increased vitality. Joy

is strength ; depression is weakness. We are to rejoice evermore ; because the joy of the Lord is our strength.

the very root of all holiness : for without this faith, without an abiding sense that Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me, without a continuing conviction that God for Christ's sake is merciful to me a sinner, it is impossible that I should love God : ' We love Him, because He first loved us ' ; and in proportion to the strength and clearness of our conviction that He hath loved us, and accepted us in His Son. And unless we love God, it is not possible that we should love our neighbour as ourselves ; nor, consequently, that we should have any right affections, either toward God, or toward man. It evidently follows, that whatever weakens our faith, must, in the same degree, obstruct our holiness : and this is not only the most effectual, but also the most compendious way of destroying all holiness ; seeing it does not affect any one Christian temper, any single grace or fruit of the Spirit, but, so far as it succeeds, tears up the very root of the whole work of God.

9. No marvel, therefore, that the ruler of the darkness of this world should here put forth all his strength. And so we find by experience. For it is far easier to conceive, than it is to express, the unspeakable violence wherewith this temptation is frequently urged on them who hunger and thirst after righteousness. When they see, in a strong and clear light, on the one hand the desperate wickedness of their own hearts, on the other hand the unspotted holiness to which they are called in Christ Jesus ; on the one hand the depth of their own corruption, of their total alienation from God, on the other the height of the glory of God, that image of the Holy One, wherein they are to be renewed ; there is, many times, no spirit left in them ; they could almost cry out, ' With God this is impossible ! ' They are ready to give up both faith and hope ; to cast away that very confidence, whereby they are to overcome all things, through Christ strengthening them ; whereby, ' after they have done the will of God,' they are to ' receive the promise.'

10. And if they ' hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end,' they shall undoubtedly receive the promise of God, reaching through both time and eternity. But here is another snare laid for our feet : while we earnestly

pant for that part of the promise which is to be accomplished here, 'for the glorious liberty of the children of God,' we may be led unawares from the consideration of the glory which shall hereafter be revealed. Our eye may be insensibly turned aside from that crown which the righteous Judge hath promised to give at that day 'to all that love His appearing'; and we may be drawn away from the view of that incorruptible inheritance which is reserved in heaven for us. But this also would be a loss to our souls, and an obstruction to our holiness. For to walk in the continual sight of our goal, is a needful help in our running the race that is set before us. This it was, the having 'respect unto the recompence of the reward,' which, of old time, encouraged Moses, rather 'to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' Nay, it is expressly said of a greater than he, that, 'for the joy that was set before Him, He endured the cross, and despised the shame,' till He 'sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.' Whence we may easily infer, how much more needful for us is the view of that joy set before us, that we may endure whatever cross the wisdom of God lays upon us, and press on through holiness to glory.

11. But while we are reaching to this, as well as to that glorious liberty which is preparatory to it, we may be in danger of falling into another snare of the devil, wherein he labours to entangle the children of God. We may take too much thought for to-morrow, so as to neglect the improvement of to-day. We may so expect perfect love, as not to use that which is already shed abroad in our hearts. There have not been wanting instances of those who have greatly suffered hereby. They were so taken up with what they were to receive hereafter, as utterly to neglect what they had already received. In expectation of having five talents more, they buried their one talent in the earth. At least, they did not improve it as they might have done, to the glory of God, and the good of their own souls.

12. Thus does the subtle adversary of God and man en-

deavour to make void the counsel of God, by dividing the gospel against itself, and making one part of it overthrow the other ; while the first work of God in the soul is destroyed by the expectation of His perfect work. We have seen several of the ways wherein he attempts this, by cutting off, as it were, the springs of holiness. But this he likewise does more directly, by making that blessed hope an occasion of unholy tempers.

13. Thus, whenever our heart is eagerly athirst for all the great and precious promises ; when we pant after the fullness of God, as the hart after the water-brook , when our soul breaketh out in fervent desire, ' Why are His chariot-wheels so long a-coming ? '—he will not neglect the opportunity of tempting us to murmur against God. He will use all his wisdom, and all his strength, if haply, in an unguarded hour, we may be influenced to repine at our Lord for thus delaying His coming. At least, he will labour to excite some degree of fretfulness or impatience ; and, perhaps, of envy at those whom we believe to have already attained the prize of our high calling. He well knows, that, by giving way to any of these tempers, we are pulling down the very thing we would build up. By *thus* following after perfect holiness, we become more unholy than before. Yea, there is great danger that our last state should be worse than the first ; like them of whom the Apostle speaks in those dreadful words, ' It had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them.'

14. And from hence he hopes to reap another advantage, even to bring up an evil report of the good way. He is sensible, how few are able to distinguish (and too many are not willing so to do) between the accidental abuse, and the natural tendency, of a doctrine. These, therefore, will he continually blend together, with regard to the doctrine of Christian perfection ; in order to prejudice the minds of unwary men against the glorious promises of God. And how frequently, how generally, I had almost said how universally, has he prevailed herein ! For who is there that observes any of these accidental ill effects

of this doctrine, and does not immediately conclude, this is its natural tendency ; and does not readily cry out, ' See, these are the fruits (meaning the natural, necessary fruits) of such doctrine ? ' Not so : they are fruits which may accidentally spring from the abuse of a great and precious truth : but the abuse of this, or any other scriptural doctrine, does by no means destroy its use. Neither can the unfaithfulness of man, perverting his right way, make the promise of God of no effect. No : let God be true, and every man a liar. The word of the Lord, it shall stand. ' Faithful is He that hath promised : He also will do it.' Let us not then be ' removed from the hope of the gospel.' Rather let us observe, which was the second thing proposed, how we may retort these fiery darts of the wicked one ; how we may rise the higher by what he intends for an occasion of our falling.

II. 1. And, first, does Satan endeavour to damp your joy in the Lord, by the consideration of your sinfulness ; added to this, that without entire, universal holiness, no man can see the Lord ? You may cast back this dart upon his own head, while, through the grace of God, the more you feel of your own vileness, the more you rejoice in confident hope, that all this shall be done away. While you hold fast this hope, every evil temper you feel, though you hate it with a perfect hatred, may be a means, not of lessening your humble joy, but rather of increasing it. ' This and this,' may you say, ' shall likewise perish from the presence of the Lord. Like as the wax melteth at the fire, so shall this melt away before His face.' By this means, the greater that change is which remains to be wrought in your soul, the more may you triumph in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of your salvation, who hath done so great things for you already, and will do so much greater things than these.

2. Secondly : the more vehemently he assaults your peace with that suggestion, ' God is holy, you are unholy ; you are immensely distant from that holiness without which you cannot see God how then can you be in the favour of God ? How can you fancy you are justified ? '—take the more earnest

heed to hold fast that, 'Not by works of righteousness which I have done, I am found in Him; I am accepted in the Beloved, not having my own righteousness (as the cause, either in whole or in part, of our justification before God), but that which is by faith in Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.' O bind this about your neck: write it upon the table of thy heart. Wear it as a bracelet upon thy arm, as frontlets between thine eyes: 'I am justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' Value and esteem, more and more, that precious truth, 'By grace we are saved through faith.' Admire, more and more, the free grace of God, in so loving the world as to give 'His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him, might not perish, but have everlasting life.' So shall the sense of the sinfulness you feel, on the one hand, and of the holiness you expect, on the other, both contribute to establish your peace, and to make it flow as a river. So shall that peace flow on with an even stream, in spite of all those mountains of ungodliness, which shall become a plain in the day when the Lord cometh to take full possession of your heart. Neither will sickness, or pain, or the approach of death occasion any doubt or fear. You know a day, an hour, a moment, with God, is as a thousand years. He cannot be straitened for time wherein to work whatever remains to be done in your soul. And God's time is always the best time. Therefore be thou careful for nothing: only make thy requests known unto Him, and that, not with doubt or fear, but thanksgiving; as being previously assured, He cannot withhold from thee any manner of thing that is good.

3. Thirdly the more you are tempted to give up your shield, to cast away your faith, your confidence in His love, so much the more take heed that you hold fast that whereunto you have attained; so much the more labour to stir up the gift of God which is in you. Never let that slip, 'I have "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous", and, "The life I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who

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II. 2. 'Careful for nothing'; i.e. anxious, worried; according to the older meaning of the word.

loved me, and gave Himself for me." ' Be this thy glory, and crown of rejoicing ; and see that no one take thy crown. Hold that fast : ' I know that my Redeemer liveth, and shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ' : and, ' I now " have redemption in His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." ' Thus, being filled with all peace and joy in believing, press on, in the peace and joy of faith, to the renewal of thy whole soul in the image of Him that created thee ! Meanwhile, cry continually to God, that thou mayest see that prize of thy high calling, not as Satan represents it, in a horrid, dreadful shape, but in its genuine, native beauty ; not as something that must be, or thou wilt go to hell, but as what may be, to lead thee to heaven. Look upon it as the most desirable gift which is in all the stores of the rich mercies of God. Beholding it in this true point of light, thou wilt hunger after it more and more , thy whole soul will be athirst for God, and for this glorious conformity to His likeness , and, having received a good hope of this, and strong consolation through grace, thou wilt no more be weary or faint in thy mind, but wilt follow on till thou attainest.

4. In the same power of faith, press on to glory. Indeed, this is the same prospect still. God hath joined from the beginning, pardon, holiness, heaven. And why should man put them asunder ? O beware of this ! Let not one link of the golden chain be broken. ' God for Christ's sake hath forgiven me. He is now renewing me in His own image. Shortly He will make me meet for Himself, and take me to stand before His face. I, whom He hath justified through the blood of His Son, being thoroughly sanctified by His Spirit, shall quickly ascend to the " New Jerusalem, the city of the living God." Yet a little while and I shall " come to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to God the Judge of all, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant." How soon will these shadows flee away, and the day of eternity dawn upon me ! How soon shall I drink of " the river of the water of life, going out of the throne of God and of the Lamb ! There all His servants shall praise Him, and shall see His face, and His name shall be upon their fore-

heads. And no night shall be there, and they have no need of a candle, or the light of the sun. For the Lord God enlighteneth them, and they shall reign for ever and ever."'

5. And if you thus 'taste of the good word, and of the powers of the world to come,' you will not murmur against God, because you are not yet 'meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.' Instead of repining at your not being wholly delivered, you will praise God for thus far delivering you. You will magnify God for what He hath done, and take it as an earnest of what He will do. You will not fret against Him, because you are not yet renewed, but bless Him because you shall be; and because 'now is your salvation' from all sin 'nearer than when you' first 'believed.' Instead of uselessly tormenting yourself because the time is not fully come, you will calmly and quietly wait for it, knowing that it 'will come, and will not tarry.' You may therefore the more cheerfully endure, as yet, the burden of sin that still remains in you, because it will not always remain. Yet a little while, and it shall be clean gone. Only 'tarry thou the Lord's leisure': be strong, and 'He shall comfort thy heart'; and put thou thy trust in the Lord!

6. And if you see any who appear (so far as man can judge, but God alone searcheth the hearts) to be already partakers of their hope, already 'made perfect in love', far from envying the grace of God in them, let it rejoice and comfort your heart. Glorify God for their sake! 'If one member is honoured,' shall not 'all the members rejoice with it'? Instead of jealousy or evil surmising concerning them, praise God for the consolation! Rejoice in having a fresh proof of the faithfulness of God, in fulfilling all His promises; and stir yourself up the more to 'apprehend that for which you are also apprehended of Christ Jesus'!

7. In order to this, redeem the time. Improve the present moment. Buy up every opportunity of growing in grace, or of doing good. Let not the thought of receiving more grace

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7. 'Redeeming the time.' The meaning appears to be, not 'buying up every opportunity,' but 'ransoming your time from its bondage to the evil days in which you live'; as a man goes into the market and

to-morrow, make you negligent of to-day. You have one talent now : if you expect five more, so much the rather improve that you have. And the more you expect to receive hereafter, the more labour for God now. Sufficient for the day is the grace thereof. God is now pouring His benefits upon you : now approve yourself a faithful steward of the present grace of God. Whatever may be to-morrow, give all diligence to-day to ' add to your faith courage, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness,' and the fear of God, till you attain that pure and perfect love ! Let these things be now ' in you, and abound ' ! Be not now slothful or unfruitful : ' so shall an entrance be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ ' !

8. Lastly : if in time past you have abused this blessed hope of being holy as He is holy, yet do not therefore cast it away. Let the abuse cease, the use remain. Use it now to the more abundant glory of God, and profit of your own soul. In steadfast faith, in calm tranquillity of spirit, in full assurance of hope, rejoicing evermore for what God hath done, press ye on unto perfection ! Daily growing in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and going on from strength to strength, in resignation, in patience, in humble thankfulness for what ye have attained, and for what ye shall, run the race set before you, ' looking unto Jesus,' till, through perfect love, ye enter into His glory !

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buys a slave from his former master, so that he may employ him for his own purposes. Our hours are naturally the slaves of the customs

and conventions of the world ; we are to redeem them from this slavery and use them in the service of God.

[Here ends the third volume of the Sermons]

# SERMONS

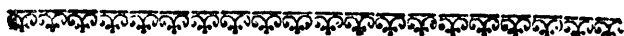
ON SEVERAL

## OCCASIONS.



By *JOHN WESLEY*, M. A.

Late FELLOW of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.



B · R I S T O L :

Printed by J. GRABHAM and W. PINE in *Wine-*  
*Street* ; and Sold at the *New-Room* in the *Horse-*  
*Fair* ; and at the *Foundery*, near *Upper-Moor-*  
*Fields* ; LONDON, 1760.

12mo, pp. 324. Two editions were published in the same year (1760), one 'Printed by John Grabham, in Wine Street,' &c., the other 'Printed by John Grabham and W. Pine in Wine Street,' &c. Green says : 'Almost all the letterpress is the same in both, page for page, yet there are some slight variations, and the head and tail pieces are different.'

Third edition, Hawes, 1777 ; Fourth, London : Paramore, 1787 ; Fifth, with some additions, London : Whitfield, 1796.

Seven sermons fill 144 pages. Then follow papers or tracts, 'Advice to the People called Methodists, with regard to Dress' ; 'The Duties of Husbands and Wives,' with 'Directions to Children,' 'Directions to Servants' added ; 'Thoughts on Christian Perfection' ; 'Christian Instructions extracted from a late French Author.' A list of 'Books published by Mr. John and Charles Wesley,' &c., fills 4 pages and contains 157 items.

## SERMON XXXVIII

### ORIGINAL SIN

THIS sermon was first published in 1759 by Grabham of Bristol as a twopenny pamphlet; and it was placed first in the fourth volume of the Sermons in 1760. Its origin is to be found in the publication by Dr. John Taylor in 1740 of a treatise entitled *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin Proposed to Free and Candid Examination*. Dr. Taylor was a learned Presbyterian minister, but with pronounced leanings to Socinianism. He was pastor of a church in Norwich, and the famous Octagon Chapel was built for him there in 1756 at a cost of over £5,000. Wesley saw it in 1757, and thought it 'the most elegant one in Europe'; he describes (*Journal*, November 23) its mahogany and brass fittings, and adds, with a touch of unworthy sarcasm, 'How can it be thought that the old, coarse gospel should find admission here?' Dr. Taylor was also the first President of the Presbyterian Theological College at Warrington, and held that position until his death in 1761. He denied the divinity of our Lord, though he thought Him 'a person of consummate virtue' (Sermon CV. 10). Wesley was at Shackerley, six miles beyond Bolton, in Lancashire, in August 1748, and found in his congregation 'many disciples of Dr. Taylor, laughing at original sin, and consequently at the whole frame of scriptural Christianity.' Again, on April 10, 1751, he rode 'to Shackerley. Being now in the very midst of Mr. Taylor's disciples, I enlarged much more than I am accustomed to do on the doctrine of Original Sin; and determined, if God should give me a few years' life, publicly to answer his new gospel.' He carried out his intention in the early part of 1757, and published his answer as *The Doctrine of Original Sin; According to Scripture, Reason, and Experience*; a treatise in four parts, rearranged in seven parts in the *Works*, 1771. Taylor's standpoint was frankly Pelagian. He did not believe that man came into the world with a sinful nature; nor did he accept any federal relationship between Adam and his descendants. He granted that men were degenerate, but held that they still had power to do their duty if they chose. Wesley respected his character and learning, and prayed for his conversion to the truth; and in a letter to Sir Harry Trelawney he says, 'I have reason to believe he

was convinced of his mistake before he died, but to acknowledge this publicly was too hard a task for him.' The only record of his having seen Dr. Taylor is in *Journal*, August 10, 1760; he was meeting the Society at Cork, when 'a person hugely daubed with gold thrust violently in. By his appearance I should have judged him to be some nobleman. But I was afterwards informed it was Dr. Taylor.'

This sermon was little more than a summary of Part I of the treatise. Wesley attached great importance to it, and in *Minutes*, 1766, he asks: 'Q. Have the sermons on Wandering Thoughts, In-being Sin, The Lord our Righteousness, and The Scripture Way of Salvation, been carefully dispersed? A. No. Let each Assistant do it now.' The sermon on In-being Sin is this one. (The use of in-being as an adjective is not recorded in the *N. E. Dict.*) The first record of its being preached is on February 1, 1758, at the Chapel (i.e. West Street); it occurs six times more in 1758, and seven times in 1759, the last date being June 10. Two of the entries are significantly at Norwich, Dr. Taylor's city.

In spite of its title, the sermon deals rather with the universality of sin than with its origin. In section 4 it is stated in St. Paul's language that 'by one man's disobedience all men were constituted sinners'; that 'in Adam all die'; and that consequently all men are by nature children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins; but there is no discussion of the nature of the Fall, or of the interpretation of the account of it in Genesis. For a discussion of this question, see introduction to Sermon V. The most important qualification of the doctrine of total depravity, by which alone it is saved from being a palpable misrepresentation of the facts, is the recognition that to every man is given a measure of the grace of the Holy Spirit, by which he is moved and helped to do right and to seek after God. As we have seen, Wesley fully accepted this doctrine of Prevenient Grace; but in this sermon he barely refers to it in i. 4, and so his account of the natural condition of mankind is felt to be unreal. This is more obvious still in the first part of the treatise on Original Sin, in which all the vices of humanity are combined in a lurid picture without the admission of a single redeeming feature. How utterly misleading, for example, is a description of the moral condition of the old Greek and Roman world which has not a word to say of the legislation of Lycurgus, the philosophy of Socrates and Plato, the teaching of the great Tragedians, the heroism of Leonidas, the honour of Regulus, the ethics of Cato and Marcus Antoninus and Epictetus, or the patriotism of Brutus! The whole thing gives us the impression of an advocate, who piles up and exaggerates everything that can be said for his side of the case, and ignores all the facts that are against him. Dr. Pope (*Theology*, ii. 63) says: 'The absolute corruption of the roots of our nature is a Manichæan error . . . con-

tradicted by the whole doctrine of original sin as taught in Scripture. Apart from Christ, and in hard theory, the ruin of man is complete. But man has never been in such a far country as not to hear the appeal of the Father.' Quite so; and Wesley sets forth here that 'hard theory' and treats it as if it expressed the actual fact. If it were not for the grace of God, man would be the monster of evil that he describes; but the grace of God cannot be thus eliminated. The moral condition of man is the product of three factors: his own fallen nature, the God-created environment in which he lives and which on the whole makes for righteousness, and the constant immanent activity of the Holy Spirit; and no account of it which leaves out the second and third factors can be anything but a caricature. If Wesley had said, 'This is what man would be apart from the divine influences exerted by his environment and by the Holy Spirit,' he might have justified his position; but he does not say so. What he does try to convey is that anterior to, and apart from, the revelation of God's pardoning love in Jesus Christ, man is absolutely and hopelessly under the control of evil; and this is not true. The student should read the chapter on 'Man and Redemption' in Dr. Scott Lidgett's *Christian Religion*; especially section ii. 2 and 3, from which I quote the following sentences: 'The frequent phrase that this is a ruined world is overstrained, in the same way as the doctrine of sin is overstrained when it is represented that total depravity means that human nature, as we know it, has become completely worthless through sin. . The extremer statements upon this subject find their biblical support by over-emphasizing certain passages of St. Paul's writings in separation from their context and from the whole of his thought' (which is Wesley's easily besetting error in exegesis). Again: 'In concrete reality, the worthlessness of the flesh does not exclude the underlying presence of the Spirit, not merely along the frontiers of human life, but actually invading its territory. The Christian doctrine never sees man as totally apart from God except for such abstract purposes as are illustrated by the writings of St. Paul.'

At the same time Wesley's main argument is not affected by his exaggerated and one-sided statements. Sin, however restrained by the grace of the Spirit, is universal, and cries out for redemption. 'We are all wicked,' says Seneca (*De Ira*, iii. 26); 'what one man blames in another, each will find in his own bosom. We being ourselves wicked, live among the wicked.' Kant wrote a treatise *On the Radical Evil of Human Nature*. Aristotle (*Nic. Ethics*, iii. 1) says: 'We are more naturally disposed [towards things that are wrong] and more easily carried away to excess, than to propriety of conduct.' Hume (*On the Passions*, vi.) says: 'We naturally desire what is forbid, and often take a pleasure in performing actions merely because they are unlawful.' Comte (*Phil. Positive*, vi. 5) says: 'We must regret

that even in the best natures the social affections are so overborne by the personal, as rarely to command conduct in a direct way.' Even Herbert Spencer (*Data of Ethics*, xv.) admits: 'Considered from the evolution point of view, the acts of men during the transition which has been, is still, and long will be, in progress, must, in most cases, be of the kind here classed as least wrong,' i.e. not right absolutely, but only less wrong than they might conceivably be. The general testimony of philosophers, poets, historians, satirists, is that Sin is the universal fact.

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*And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*  
—GEN. vi. 5.

1. How widely different is this from the fair pictures of human nature which men have drawn in all ages! The writings of many of the ancients abound with gay descriptions of the dignity of man, whom some of them paint as having all virtue and happiness in his composition, or, at least, entirely in his power, without being beholden to any other being: yea, as self-sufficient, able to live on his own stock, and little inferior to God Himself.

2. Nor have Heathens alone, men who are guided in their researches by little more than the dim light of reason, but many likewise of them that bear the name of Christ, and to whom are entrusted the oracles of God, spoken as magnificently concerning the nature of man, as if it were all innocence and perfection. Accounts of this kind have particularly

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1. As far as the classical writers are concerned, these 'fair pictures of human nature' are professedly descriptions, not of man as he is, but of man as he was in some imaginary golden age, or as he might be, if he always followed the laws of right.

2. Lecky (*Hist. of England*, ii. chap. 9) says: 'The utter depravity of human nature, the lost condition of every man who is born into the world, are doctrines which during the greater part of the eighteenth century were seldom

heard from a Church of England pulpit.' In Sermon CXXIII, 2, Wesley says: 'How many laboured panegyrics do we now read and hear on the dignity of human nature! One eminent preacher, in one of his sermons, preached and printed a few years ago, does not scruple to affirm, first, that men in general (if not every individual) are very wise; secondly, that men in general are very virtuous; and thirdly, that they are very happy. And I do not know that any one has been so hardy as to controvert the assertion.' In

abounded in the present century and perhaps in no part of the world more than in our own country. Here not a few persons of strong understanding, as well as extensive learning, have employed their utmost abilities to show, what they termed, 'the fair side of human nature.' And it must be acknowledged, that, if their accounts of him be just, man is still but 'a little lower than the angels'; or, as the words may be more literally rendered, 'a little less than God.'

3. Is it any wonder, that these accounts are very readily received by the generality of men? For who is not easily persuaded to think favourably of himself? Accordingly, writers of this kind are most universally read, admired, applauded. And innumerable are the converts they have made, not only in the gay but the learned world. So that it is now quite unfashionable to talk otherwise, to say anything to the disparagement of human nature; which is generally allowed, notwithstanding a few infirmities, to be very innocent, and wise, and virtuous!

4. But, in the meantime, what must we do with our Bibles?—for they will never agree with this. These accounts, however pleasing to flesh and blood, are utterly irreconcilable with the scriptural. The Scripture avers, that 'by one man's disobedience all men were constituted sinners'; that 'in Adam all died,' spiritually died, lost the life and the image of God; that fallen, sinful Adam then 'begat a son in his own likeness'—nor was it possible he should beget him in any other, for 'who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?'—that consequently we, as well as other men, were by nature 'dead in trespasses and sins,' 'without hope, without God

his *Works*, v. 351, Bolingbroke says: 'Let us be convinced, however, in opposition to atheists and divines, that the general state of mankind in the present scheme of providence is a state not only tolerable but happy.' So Pope in *Essay on Man*, iii. 232, says, of the earlier ages of the world:

Man, like his Maker, saw that all was right;  
To virtue, in the paths of pleasure, trod,  
And owned a father when he owned a God.

Thirty years later Rousseau became the prophet of the New Sentimentalism, which found in the idealized Red Indian the finest example of nature unspoiled by civilization.

The Hebrew is 'A little lower than Elohim'; which the LXX and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (ii. 9) translate 'angels.' But God is the usual meaning of the word in the O.T.

in the world,' and, therefore, 'children of wrath'; that every man may say, 'I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me', that 'there is no difference,' in that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God,' of that glorious image of God wherein man was originally created. And hence, when 'the Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, He saw they were all gone out of the way, they were altogether become abominable, there was none righteous, no, not one,' none that truly sought after God: just agreeable this to what is declared by the Holy Ghost in the words above recited, 'God saw,' when He looked down from heaven before, 'that the wickedness of man was great in the earth'; so great, that 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'

This is God's account of man: from which I shall take occasion, first, to show what men were before the flood: secondly, to inquire, whether they are not the same now: and, thirdly, to add some inferences.

I. 1. I am, first, by opening the words of the text, to show what men were before the flood. And we may fully depend on the account here given for God saw it, and He cannot be deceived. He 'saw that the wickedness of man was great':—not of this or that man; not of a few men only; not barely of the greater part, but of man in general; of men universally. The word includes the whole human race, every partaker of human nature. And it is not easy for us to compute their numbers, to tell how many thousands and millions they were. The earth then retained much of its primaeval beauty and original fruitfulness. The face of the globe was not rent and torn as it is now; and spring and summer went hand in

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I. 1. The idea that before the Flood the earth was more fruitful, and that there was nothing but spring and summer weather, is an absurd fancy without the slightest warrant. Wesley seems to have got the notion from Dr. Watts's *Ruin and Recovery of Mankind*, quoted in

*Original Sin*, Part IV, Intro. But he fails to notice that Dr. Watts is speaking of the world before the Fall, not before the Flood. As to the extraordinary rate of increase of population which Wesley imagines to have resulted from the longevity of the antediluvians, it is hardly

hand. It is therefore probable, it afforded sustenance for far more inhabitants than it is now capable of sustaining ; and these must be immensely multiplied, while men begat sons and daughters for seven or eight hundred years together. Yet among all this inconceivable number, only ' Noah found favour with God.' He alone (perhaps including part of his household) was an exception from the universal wickedness, which, by the just judgement of God, in a short time after brought on universal destruction. All the rest were partakers in the same guilt, as they were in the same punishment.

2. ' God saw all the imaginations of the thoughts of his heart '—of his soul, his inward man, the spirit within him, the principle of all his inward and outward motions. He ' saw all the imaginations '—it is not possible to find a word of a more extensive signification. It includes whatever is formed, made, fabricated within , all that is or passes in the soul , every inclination, affection, passion, appetite ; every temper, design, thought. It must of consequence include every word and action, as naturally flowing from these fountains, and being either good or evil according to the fountain from which they severally flow.

3. Now God saw that all this, the whole thereof, was evil—contrary to moral rectitude ; contrary to the nature of God, which necessarily includes all good , contrary to the divine will, the eternal standard of good and evil , contrary to the pure, holy image of God, wherein man was originally created, and wherein he stood when God, surveying the works of His hands, saw them all to be very good ; contrary to justice, mercy, and truth, and to the essential relations which each man bore to his Creator and his fellow creatures.

4. But was there not good mingled with the evil ? Was

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necessary to state that whatever the origin may have been of the numbers in the fifth chapter of Genesis, they cannot be regarded as historical ; and people living and propagating their kind during ordinary life-times would be just as effective in populating the world as these long-lived

patriarchs, who were, taking the average of the ten, 155 years old when they begot their first-born. Until some further light from the Babylonian tablets comes to explain how these numbers arose and what they really mean, it is a waste of time to discuss the matter.

there not light intermixed with the darkness? No, none at all: 'God saw that the whole imagination of the heart of man was only evil.' It cannot indeed be denied, but many of them, perhaps all, had good motions put into their hearts; for the Spirit of God did then also 'strive with man,' if haply he might repent, more especially during that gracious reprieve, the hundred and twenty years, while the ark was preparing. But still 'in his flesh dwelt no good thing'; all his nature was purely evil: it was wholly consistent with itself, and unmixed with anything of an opposite nature.

5. However, it may still be matter of inquiry, 'Was there no intermission of this evil? Were there no lucid intervals, wherein something good might be found in the heart of man?' We are not here to consider, what the grace of God might occasionally work in his soul; and, abstracted from this, we have no reason to believe there was any intermission of that evil. For God, who 'saw the whole imagination of the thoughts of his heart to be *only* evil,' saw likewise, that it was always the same, that it 'was only evil *continually*', every year, every day, every hour, every moment. He never deviated into good.

## II. Such is the authentic account of the whole race of

4. This somewhat grudging recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit is the only definite reference in the sermon to the all-important doctrine of prevenient grace. Yet Wesley fully believed in it; for example, in Sermon LXXXV, iii. 4, he says: 'No man living is entirely destitute of what is vulgarly called natural conscience. But this is not natural; it is more properly termed, preventing grace. Every man has a greater or less measure of this, which waiteth not for the call of man.' He would doubtless have justified the neglect of it in this sermon by saying that he was here describing the *natural* state of man; but surely the gift of

the Spirit is an element in Nature, as we know it. Of course it is possible to omit in an abstract problem forces which are never really absent in fact. Thus, problems in mechanics are often set with the proviso that friction may be neglected in their solution. But in applying the results of such an investigation, the omitted force must be allowed for. Imagine the disastrous effect of trying to run a railway-train without taking account of friction! It is this and another omission (see note on ii. 3 below) that makes this whole sermon so unreal.

mankind which He who knoweth what is in man, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, hath left upon record for our instruction. Such were all men before God brought the flood upon the earth. We are, secondly, to inquire, whether they are the same now.

1. And this is certain, the Scripture gives us no reason to think any otherwise of them. On the contrary, all the above-cited passages of Scripture refer to those who lived after the flood. It was above a thousand years after, that God declared by David concerning the children of men, 'They are all gone out of the way' of truth and holiness, 'there is none righteous, no, not one.' And to this bear all the prophets witness, in their several generations. So Isaiah, concerning God's peculiar people (and certainly the Heathens were in no better condition), 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.' The same account is given by all the Apostles, yea, by the whole tenor of the oracles of God. From all these we learn, concerning man in his natural state, unassisted by the grace of God, that 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is' still 'evil, only evil,' and that 'continually.'

2. And this account of the present state of man is confirmed by daily experience. It is true, the natural man discerns it not: and this is not to be wondered at. So long as a man born blind continues so, he is scarce sensible of his want much less, could we suppose a place where all were born without sight, would they be sensible of the want of it. In like manner, so long as men remain in their natural blindness of understanding, they are not sensible of their spiritual wants, and of this in particular. But as soon as God opens the eyes of their understanding, they see the state they were in before; they are then deeply convinced, that 'every man living,' themselves especially, are, by nature, 'altogether vanity'; that is, folly and ignorance, sin and wickedness.

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II. 2. Mr. H. G. Wells, in *The Country of the Blind*, has drawn an imaginative picture of just such a condition of things as is here supposed.

3. We see, when God opens our eyes, that we were before *ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*—*without God*, or rather, *Atheists in the world*. We had, by nature, no knowledge of God, no acquaintance with Him. It is true, as soon as we came to the use of reason, we learned 'the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and Godhead, from the things that are made.' From the things that are seen we inferred the existence of an eternal, powerful Being, that is not seen. But still, although we acknowledged His being, we had no acquaintance with Him. As we know there is an Emperor of China, whom yet we do not know, so we knew there was a King of all the earth, yet we knew Him not. Indeed we could not by any of our natural faculties. By none of these could we attain the knowledge of God. We could no more perceive Him by our natural understanding, than we could see Him with our eyes. For 'no one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him. And no one knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Father revealeth Him.'

4. We read of an ancient king who, being desirous to know what was the *natural language* of men, in order to bring the matter to a certain issue, made the following experiment he ordered two infants, as soon as they were born, to be conveyed to a place prepared for them, where they were brought up without any instruction at all, and without ever hearing a human voice. And what was the event? Why, that when they were at length brought out of their confinement, they spake no language at all; they uttered only inarticulate sounds, like those of other animals. Were

3. Here is a passing acknowledgement of the second omitted element of the problem—the fact that man lives in an environment planned by God, which makes for righteousness. This is surely part of his natural state. See introduction, and note on i. 4 above.

4. The story is told by Herodotus (ii. 2) of Psammetichus, King of Egypt (663–609 B.C.) But Wesley does not tell it correctly. The

children were brought up by a goat-herd for two years; and at the end of that time, when their guardian entered their room, they ran to him, crying, 'Bekos'; which Farrar thinks was an onomatopoeic name for the goat, derived from its bleating. See his *Chapters on Language*, chap. ii. Farrar thinks that, whilst it is unlikely that a single child brought up in isolation would develop a language, a colony of

two infants in like manner to be brought up from the womb without being instructed in any religion, there is little room to doubt but (unless the grace of God interposed) the event would be just the same. They would have no religion at all : they would have no more knowledge of God than the beasts of the field, than the wild ass's colt. Such is natural religion, abstracted from traditional, and from the influences of God's Spirit.

5. And having no knowledge, we can have no love of God : we cannot love Him we know not. Most men *talk* indeed of loving God, and perhaps imagine they do ; at least, few will acknowledge they do not love Him : but the fact is too plain to be denied. No man loves God by nature, any more than he does a stone, or the earth he treads upon. What we love we delight in : but no man has naturally any delight in God. In our natural state we cannot conceive how any one should delight in Him. We take no pleasure in Him at all ; He is utterly tasteless to us. To love God ! it is far above, out of our sight. We cannot, naturally, attain unto it.

6. We have by nature, not only no love, but no fear of God. It is allowed, indeed, that most men have, sooner or later, a kind of senseless, irrational fear, properly called 'superstition', though the blundering Epicureans gave it the name of 'religion.' Yet even this is not natural, but acquired ; chiefly by conversation or from example. By nature 'God is not in all our thoughts' : we leave Him to manage His

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infants would certainly invent some sort of speech. Similar experiments are related to have been tried by Frederic II of Germany and James IV of Scotland.

But where did this 'traditional' religion come from ? Apparently Wesley distinguishes it from 'the influences of God's Spirit' ; if so, what becomes of his theory that the natural man has no capacity for religion at all ? So in par. 6 below, he says that religion is not natural,

but acquired ; 'chiefly by conversation or from example.' Whence came the religion that was thus the subject of conversation and the basis of example ?

6. I suppose Wesley was thinking of the famous line of Lucretius, the Epicurean poet (*De Nat. Rerum*, i. 101), where, after describing the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, he exclaims, 'Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum' ('So great a crime could superstition prompt').

own affairs, to sit quietly, as we imagine, in heaven, and leave us on earth to manage ours, so that we have no more of the fear of God before our eyes, than of the love of God in our hearts.

7. Thus are all men 'Atheists in the world.' But Atheism itself does not screen us from idolatry. In his natural state, every man born into the world is a rank idolater. Perhaps, indeed, we may not be such in the vulgar sense of the word. We do not, like the idolatrous Heathens, worship molten or graven images. We do not bow down to the stock of a tree, to the work of our own hands. We do not pray to the angels or saints in heaven, any more than to the saints that are upon the earth. But what then? We have set up our idols in our hearts; and to these we bow down, and worship them: we worship ourselves, when we pay that honour to ourselves which is due to God only. Therefore, all pride is idolatry, it is ascribing to ourselves what is due to God alone. And although pride was not made for man, yet where is the man that is born without it? But hereby we rob God of His inalienable right, and idolatrously usurp His glory.

8. But pride is not the only sort of idolatry which we are all by nature guilty of. Satan has stamped his own image on our heart in self-will also. 'I will,' said he, before he was cast out of heaven, 'I will sit upon the sides of the north': I will do my own will and pleasure, independently on that of my Creator. The same does every man born into the world say, and that in a thousand instances, nay, and avow it too, without ever blushing upon the account, without either fear or

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7. It is a pity that Wesley was so fond of calling names. The terms 'atheist' and 'idolater' may, by derivation, mean simply 'one who is without God' and 'one who worships a false god'; but they have become offensive epithets as they are ordinarily used, and are far more likely to irritate than to convince.

8. Isa. xiv. 13 has nothing to do

with Satan or his expulsion from heaven. It is said of the king of Babylon. Wesley was misled by the A.V. translation of the previous verse, where he is addressed as 'Lucifer'; and from the early Christian misapplication of the passage Lucifer had come to be used as a proper name for the Devil. The R.V. has, correctly, 'day-star.'

shame. Ask the man, 'Why did you do this?' He answers, 'Because I had a mind to it.' What is this but, 'Because it was my will'; that is, in effect, because the devil and I are agreed; because Satan and I govern our actions by one and the same principle. The will of God, meantime, is not in his thoughts, is not considered in the least degree; although it be the supreme rule of every intelligent creature, whether in heaven or earth, resulting from the essential, unalterable relation which all creatures bear to their Creator.

9. So far we bear the image of the devil, and tread in his steps. But at the next step we leave Satan behind; we run into an idolatry whereof he is not guilty: I mean, love of the world; which is now as natural to every man, as to love his own will. What is more natural to us than to seek happiness in the creature, instead of the Creator—to seek that satisfaction in the works of His hands, which can be found in God only? What more natural than 'the desire of the flesh'? that is, of the pleasure of sense in every kind? Men indeed talk magnificently of despising these low pleasures, particularly men of learning and education. They affect to sit loose to the gratification of those appetites wherein they stand on a level with the beasts that perish. But it is mere affectation! for every man is conscious to himself, that in this respect he is, by nature, a very beast. Sensual appetites, even those of the lowest kind, have, more or less, the dominion over him. They lead him captive; they drag him to and fro, in spite of his boasted reason. The man, with all his good breeding, and other accomplishments, has no pre-eminence over the goat nay, it is much to be doubted, whether the beast has not the pre-eminence over him. Certainly he has,

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9. It is utterly wrong to say that we bear the image of the Devil. Dr. W. B. Pope (*Theology*, ii. 58), speaking of the effect of the Fall, says: 'Not only was the natural image of God retained; the eternal sense of right and wrong and good and evil was not suffered to be effaced,

and thus the elements of the moral image also were shielded from absolute violation. The Fall was the utter ruin of nothing in our humanity; only the depravation of every faculty. The human mind retains the principles of truth; the heart the capacity of holy affections;

if we may hearken to one of their modern oracles, who very decently tells us,

Once in a season beasts too taste of love ;  
Only the beast of reason is its slave,  
And in that folly drudges all the year.

A considerable difference indeed, it must be allowed, there is between man and man, arising (beside that wrought by preventing grace) from difference of constitution and of education. But, notwithstanding this, who, that is not utterly ignorant of himself, can here cast the first stone at another ? Who can abide the test of our blessed Lord's comment on the Seventh Commandment—' He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart ' ? So that one knows not which to wonder at most, the ignorance or the insolence of those men who speak with such disdain of them that are overcome by desires which every man has felt in his own breast ; the desire of every pleasure of sense, innocent or not, being natural to every child of man.

10. And so is 'the desire of the eye': the desire of the pleasures of the imagination. These arise either from great, or beautiful, or uncommon objects—if the two former do not coincide with the latter, for perhaps it would appear, upon a diligent inquiry, that neither grand nor beautiful objects please any longer than they are new, that when the novelty of them is over, the greatest part, at least, of the pleasure they give is over ; and in the same proportion as they become familiar, they become flat and insipid. But let us experience this ever so often, the same desire will remain still. The inbred thirst continues fixed in the soul ; nay, the more it is indulged, the more it increases, and incites us to follow after another, and

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the will its freedom, not yet the freedom of necessary evil.'

This quotation is in blank verse, which suggests James Thomson, Young, or Akenside ; but I cannot find these lines in any of them.

10. Novelty is of course always a

stimulus to interest ; but it is quite untrue that 'neither grand nor beautiful objects please any longer than they are new' ; witness the growing pleasure we find in a familiar piece of music, or a picture that we have come to appreciate more and

yet another object ; although we leave every one with an abortive hope, and a deluded expectation. Yea,

The hoary fool, who many days  
Has struggled with continued sorrow,  
Renews his hope, and fondly lays  
The desperate bet upon to-morrow !

To-morrow comes ! 'Tis noon ! 'Tis night !  
This day, like all the former, flies :  
Yet on he goes, to seek delight  
To-morrow, till to-night he dies !

II. A third symptom of this fatal disease—the love of the world, which is so deeply rooted in our nature—is ‘ the pride of life ’ ; the desire of praise, of the honour that cometh of men. This the greatest admirers of human nature allow to be strictly natural ; as natural as the sight, or hearing, or any other of the external senses. And are they ashamed of it, even men of letters, men of refined and improved understanding ? So far from it, that they glory therein ! They applaud themselves for their love of applause ! Yea, eminent Christians, so called, make no difficulty of adopting the saying of the old, vain Heathen, ‘ *Animi dissoluti est et nequam negligere quid de se homines sentiant* : ’ ‘ Not to regard what men think of us is the mark of a wicked and abandoned mind.’ So that to go calm and unmoved through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report, is with them the sign of one that is, indeed, not fit to live ‘ away with such a fellow from the earth ! ’ But would one imagine that these men had ever heard of Jesus Christ or His Apostles ; or that they knew who

more as we knew it better, or the charm of a friend’s face, or a landscape.

These verses are quoted from Prior’s ‘ Lines to the Hon. Charles Montague ’ ; in the seventh line the original reads, ‘ Yet on he runs,’ &c.

II. The Latin quotation is apparently an inaccurate version of Cicero, *De Officiis*, i. 28. 99: ‘ Negligere

quid de se quisque sentiat, non solum arrogantis est, sed etiam omnino dissoluti ’ ( ‘ To be careless of what everybody thinks of one is the mark of a man, not only arrogant, but quite unprincipled ’ ). Wesley treats the great classical authors— ‘ the old, vain Heathen ! ’—with somewhat scanty respect.

it was that said, ' How can ye believe who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only ? ' But if this be really so, if it be impossible to believe, and consequently to please God, so long as we receive or seek honour one of another, and seek not the honour which cometh of God only ; then in what a condition are all mankind ! the Christians as well as Heathens ! since they all seek honour one of another ! since it is as natural for them so to do, themselves being the judges, as it is to see the light which strikes upon their eye, or to hear the sound which enters their ear , yea, since they account it a sign of a virtuous mind, to seek the praise of men, and of a vicious one to be content with the honour that cometh of God only !

III. 1. I proceed to draw a few inferences from what has been said. And, first, from hence we may learn one grand fundamental difference between Christianity, considered as a system of doctrines, and the most refined Heathenism. Many of the ancient Heathens have largely described the vices of particular men. They have spoken much against their covetousness, or cruelty ; their luxury, or prodigality. Some have dared to say, that ' no man is born without vices of one kind or another.' But still, as none of them were apprised of the fall of man, so none of them knew of his total corruption. They knew not that all men were empty of all good, and filled with all manner of evil. They were wholly ignorant of the entire depravation of the whole human nature, of every man born into the world, in every faculty of his soul, not so much by those particular vices which reign in particular persons, as by the general flood of Atheism and idolatry, of pride, self-will, and love of the world. This, therefore, is the first grand distinguishing point between Heathenism and Christianity. The one acknowledges that many men are infected with many vices, and even born with a proneness to them ; but supposes

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III. 1. ' No man is born,' &c. ; a translation of Horace, *Sat.* i. 3. 68 : ' Vitiis nemo sine nascitur ' ; quoted again in *Original Sin*, Part II (p. 306

in *Works*, vol. ix. 1872), where other passages from the Latin classics to the same effect are given.

withal, that in some the natural good much over-balances the evil: the other declares that all men are 'conceived in sin,' and 'shapen in wickedness'—that hence there is in every man a 'carnal mind, which is enmity against God, which is not, cannot be, subject to' His 'law'; and which so infects the whole soul, that 'there dwelleth in' him, 'in his flesh,' in his natural state, 'no good thing', but 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is evil,' only evil, and that 'continually.'

2. Hence we may, secondly, learn, that all who deny this, call it 'original sin,' or by any other title, are but heathens still, in the fundamental point which differences Heathenism from Christianity. They may, indeed, allow, that men have many vices; that some are born with us, and that consequently, we are not born altogether so wise or so virtuous as we should be; there being few that will roundly affirm, 'We are born with as much propensity to good as to evil, and that every man is, by nature, as virtuous and wise as Adam was at his creation.' But here is the *shibboleth* Is man by nature filled with all manner of evil? Is he void of all good? Is he wholly fallen? Is his soul totally corrupted? Or to come back to the text, is 'every imagination of the thoughts of his heart only evil continually'? Allow this, and you are so far a Christian. Deny it, and you are but an Heathen still.

3. We may learn from hence, in the third place, what is the proper nature of religion, of the religion of Jesus Christ. It is *θεραπεῖα ψυχῆς*—God's method of *healing a soul* which is thus diseased. Hereby the great Physician of souls applies

2. It is an extraordinary statement to make that the doctrine of original sin is 'the fundamental point which differences Heathenism from Christianity.' Indeed, all through this sermon there is a tendency to exaggeration and over-emphasis that really weakens the force of the preacher's arguments.

'Shibboleth'; see Judges xii. 4-6. The word came to be used, in the

sense of a word or formula adopted by some party or sect as its differentiating mark, about the beginning of the seventeenth century.

3. In the preface to *Original Sin* Wesley says: 'Nor can Christian philosophy be more properly defined than in Plato's word: It is *θεραπεῖα ψυχῆς*, "the only true method of healing a distempered soul." But what need of this, if we are in perfect

medicines to heal this sickness, to restore human nature, totally corrupted in all its faculties. God heals all our Atheism by the knowledge of Himself, and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, by giving us faith, a divine evidence and conviction of God, and the things of God—in particular, of this important truth, ‘Christ loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.’ By repentance and lowliness of heart, the deadly disease of pride is healed, that of self-will by resignation, a meek and thankful submission to the will of God, and for the love of the world in all its branches, the love of God is the sovereign remedy. Now, this is properly religion, ‘faith’ thus ‘working by love’: working the genuine meek humility, entire deadness to the world, with a loving, thankful acquiescence in, and conformity to, the whole will and word of God.

4. Indeed, if man were not thus fallen, there would be no need of all this. There would be no occasion for this work in the heart, this renewal in the spirit of our mind. The superfluity of godliness would then be a more proper expression than the ‘superfluity of naughtiness.’ For an outside religion, without any godliness at all, would suffice to all rational intents and purposes. It does, accordingly, suffice, in the judgement of those who deny this corruption of our nature. They make very little more of religion than the famous Mr. Hobbes did of reason. According to him, reason is only ‘a well-ordered train of words’: according to them, religion is only a well-ordered train of words and actions. And they speak consistently with themselves, for if the inside be not full of wickedness, if this be clean already, what remains, but to

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health?’ The reference is to Plato’s *Gorgias*, 464 B, where Plato says that as the *θεραπεία* of the body includes two branches, gymnastic and medicine, so that of the soul includes legislation and justice. He does not mean by the word merely the healing of the sick body or soul, but also the training of the sound body or soul; so that there *is* need of it, even in perfect health. I question whether Wesley had read the passage

in the original; the only mention in his *Journal* of his reading Plato is on December 17, 1736, in Savannah; and he never quotes from him directly in any of his works, except in this one passage. In Sermon XXIX, ii. 1, he quotes a passage from the *Phaedrus*; but it is clear that he found it not in the original, but in Cicero. See note.

4. Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury (1588–1679), the greatest name in

'cleanse the outside of the cup'? Outward reformation, if their supposition be just, is indeed the one thing needful.

5. But ye have not so learned the oracles of God. Ye know that He who seeth what is in man gives a far different account both of nature and grace, of our fall and our recovery. Ye know that the great end of religion is, to renew our hearts in the image of God, to repair that total loss of righteousness and true holiness which we sustained by the sin of our first parents. Ye know that all religion which does not answer this end, all that stops short of this, the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of Him that created it, is no other than a poor farce, and a mere mockery of God, to the destruction of our own soul. O beware of all those teachers of lies, who would palm this upon you for Christianity! Regard them not, although they should come unto you with all the deceivableness of unrighteousness, with all smoothness of language, all decency, yea, beauty and elegance of expression, all professions of earnest good-will to you, and reverence for the holy Scriptures. Keep to the plain, old faith, 'once delivered to the saints,' and delivered by the Spirit of God to our hearts. Know your disease! Know your cure! Ye were born in sin: therefore, 'ye must be born again,' born of God. By nature ye are wholly corrupted: by grace ye shall be wholly renewed. In Adam ye all died: in the second Adam, in Christ, ye all are made alive. 'You that were dead in sins hath He quickened': He hath already given you a principle of life, even faith in Him who loved you and gave Himself for you! Now, 'go on from faith to faith,' until your whole sickness be healed, and all that 'mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus'!

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philosophy in England between Bacon and Locke. He was a thorough-going Nominalist and Materialist. All knowledge, he thought, grew out of sensations, which reappear in memory, and are indicated by words, which, as being applied to many

sensations, acquire a character of generality. Logic is thus nothing but the proper arrangement and ordering of words. In Sermon LXX, ii. 4, Wesley tells us that his last words were, 'I am taking a leap in the dark.'

## SERMON XXXIX

### THE NEW BIRTH

THE first mention I find of this text is on May 29, 1743, the day of the opening of the West Street Chapel. After preaching there in the morning on 'the gospel for the day, part of the third chapter of St. John,' which includes this verse, Wesley 'preached at the Great Gardens' (in Whitechapel) 'at five, to an immense congregation, on "Ye must be born again."' The Great Gardens lay to the north of Whitechapel Road, about 200 yards east of St. Mary's Church; the position is still marked by Great Garden Street. In the Sermon Register (1747-61) this text occurs once in December 1749, once in 1750, once in 1751, three times in 1753, three times in 1755, eleven in 1756, four in 1757, fourteen in 1758, twelve in 1759, three times in 1760, and not at all in 1761. In 1759 on three occasions Gen. vi. 5 (Original Sin) was the morning subject, and this sermon immediately followed in the afternoon or evening, which throws light on the relative position of these sermons in the volume of 1760. The reason for the New Birth is, as division I shows, the Fall of Man.

Sermons XIV and XV, which deal with the same subject, were published in Vol. II of the Sermons in 1748; and it seems likely that this sermon took their place, and became more and more a favourite with the preacher, until it too was printed in the fourth volume in 1760. It contains no new doctrine; but the distinction between justification, regeneration, and sanctification is drawn with a firmer hand; the necessity for the New Birth is traced back to the Fall; the analogy between physical and spiritual birth, already indicated in Sermon XV, i, is more fully worked out; and the statement in Sermon XIV, i, that the privileges of the New Birth 'are ordinarily annexed to baptism' is carefully guarded from any possible misunderstanding.

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*Ye must be born again.*—JOHN iii. 7.

I. IF any doctrines within the whole compass of Christianity may be properly termed 'fundamental,' they are doubtless

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1. Compare Sermon XV, i.

these two,—the doctrine of justification, and that of the new birth the former relating to that great work which God does *for us*, in forgiving our sins; the latter, to the great work which God does *in us*, in renewing our fallen nature. In order of time, neither of these is before the other; in the moment we are justified by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Jesus, we are also ‘born of the Spirit’; but in order of *thinking*, as it is termed, justification precedes the new birth. We first conceive His wrath to be turned away, and then His Spirit to work in our hearts.

2. How great importance then must it be of, to every child of man, thoroughly to understand these fundamental doctrines! From a full conviction of this, many excellent men have wrote very largely concerning justification, explaining every point relating thereto, and opening the scriptures which treat upon it. Many likewise have wrote on the new birth: and some of them largely enough; but yet not so clearly as might have been desired, nor so deeply and accurately, having either given a dark, abstruse account of it, or a slight and superficial one. Therefore a full, and at the same time a clear, account of the new birth seems to be wanting still, such as may enable us to give a satisfactory answer to these three questions: first, Why must we be born again—what is the foundation of this doctrine of the new birth? secondly, How must we be born again—what is the nature of the new birth? and, thirdly, Wherefore must we be born again—to what end is it necessary? These questions, by the assistance of God, I shall briefly and plainly answer; and then subjoin a few inferences which will naturally follow.

I. 1. And, first, Why must we be born again? What is the foundation of this doctrine? The foundation of it lies near as deep as the creation of the world, in the scriptural account whereof we read, ‘And God,’ the three-one God, ‘said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him’

I. 1. It is more usual to distinguish two elements in the divine image in man: (1) the natural image, including what is here called

(Gen. i. 26, 27) :—not barely in his *natural image*, a picture of His own immortality ; a spiritual being, endued with understanding, freedom of will, and various affections, nor merely in his *political image*, the governor of this lower world, having ‘dominion over the fishes of the sea, and over all the earth’ : but chiefly in his *moral image* ; which, according to the Apostle, is ‘righteousness and true holiness’ (Eph. iv. 24). In this image of God was man made. ‘God is love’ ; accordingly, man at his creation was full of love, which was the sole principle of all his tempers, thoughts, words, and actions. God is full of justice, mercy, and truth, so was man as he came from the hands of his Creator. God is spotless purity ; and so man was in the beginning pure from every sinful blot ; otherwise God could not have pronounced him, as well as all the other works of His hands, ‘very good’ (Gen. i. 31). This he could not have been, had he not been pure from sin, and filled with righteousness and true holiness. For there is no medium : if we suppose an intelligent creature not to love God, not to be righteous and holy, we necessarily suppose him not to be good at all, much less to be ‘very good.’

2. But, although man was made in the image of God, yet he was not made immutable. This would have been inconsistent with that state of trial in which God was pleased to

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the political—that is, the mental constitution of man, his reason and power to apprehend truth, in virtue of which he is able to master and control the lower animals, and make the forces of nature subservient to his needs ; and (2) the moral image, the knowledge of right and wrong, and the capacity for fellowship with God. The former seems to have been developed from the mental capacities of the lower animals, for it is found in them in germ, and in ever higher degree as we rise in the scale of life ; the latter is that which makes man distinct from the brute, and was a definite gift bestowed on him when the due time came. In

Sermon LX, i. 5, Wesley says : ‘What then is the barrier between men and brutes ? It was not reason. Who can deny that brutes have this ? We may as well deny that they have sight or hearing. But it is this : Man is capable of God ; the inferior creatures are not. We have no ground to believe that they are, in any degree, capable of knowing, loving, or obeying God. This is the specific difference between man and brute.’ This moral image includes freedom of choice, and therefore the possibility of a wrong choice.

2. The natural or permanent image of God in man is amissible ; the moral, from the very nature of the case,

place him. He was therefore created able to stand, and yet liable to fall. And this God Himself apprised him of, and gave him a solemn warning against it. Nevertheless, man did not abide in honour: he fell from his high estate. He 'ate of the tree whereof the Lord had commanded him, Thou shalt not eat thereof.' By this wilful act of disobedience to his Creator, this flat rebellion against his Sovereign, he openly declared that he would no longer have God to rule over him, that he would be governed by his own will, and not the will of Him that created him, and that he would not seek his happiness in God, but in the world, in the works of his hands. Now, God had told him before, 'In the day that thou eatest' of that fruit, 'thou shalt surely die.' And the word of the Lord cannot be broken. Accordingly, in that day he did die: he died to God—the most dreadful of all deaths. He lost the life of God: he was separated from Him, in union with whom his spiritual life consisted. The body dies when it is separated from the soul, the soul, when it is separated from God. But this separation from God, Adam sustained in the day, the hour, he ate of the forbidden fruit. And of this he gave immediate proof, presently showing by his behaviour, that the love of God was extinguished in his soul, which was now 'alienated from the life of God.' Instead of this, he was now under the power of servile fear, so that he fled from the presence of the Lord. Yea, so little did he retain even of the knowledge of Him who filleth heaven and earth, that he endeavoured to 'hide himself from the Lord God among the trees of the garden' (Gen. iii. 8), so had he lost both the knowledge and the love of God, without which the image of God could not subsist. Of this, therefore, he was deprived at the same time, and became unholy as well as unhappy. In

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could be lost. Dr. Pope (*Theology*, i. 424) says: 'The distinction between the image that was indestructible and that which might be lost has an unqualified and necessary truth.' In Sermon LVII, ii. 6, Wesley puts it, 'Adam freely preferred evil to good. In that moment he lost the

moral image of God, and, in part, the natural; he commenced unholy, foolish, and unhappy.' The folly was not, however, the result of any loss of the natural image, but was due to the failure of the moral nature to give full weight to moral motives.

the room of this, he had sunk into pride and self-will, the very image of the devil ; and into sensual appetites and desires, the image of the beasts that perish.

3. If it be said, 'Nay, but that threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," refers to temporal death, and that alone, to the death of the body only' ; the answer is plain ; to affirm this is flatly and palpably to make God a liar ; to aver that the God of truth positively affirmed a thing contrary to truth. For it is evident Adam did not *die* in this sense, 'in the day that he ate thereof.' He lived, in the sense opposite to this death, above nine hundred years after. So that this cannot possibly be understood of the death of the body, without impeaching the veracity of God. It must therefore be understood of spiritual death, the loss of the life and image of God.

4. And in Adam all died, all human kind, all the children of men who were then in Adam's loins. The natural consequence of this is, that every one descended from him comes into the world spiritually dead, dead to God, wholly dead in sin ; entirely void of the life of God ; void of the image of God, of all that righteousness and holiness wherein Adam was created. Instead of this, every man born into the world now bears the image of the devil, in pride and self-will ; the image

3. This view is much more in accord with the facts than the one expressed in Sermon V, i. 5, where the liability to physical death is stated to be due to the Fall. In Sermon LX, i. 5, Wesley affirms that the lower animals were all immortal before the Fall, and quotes in support Wisdom i. 13 : 'God made not death.' But the science of palaeontology was still in its infancy, and there was no agreement amongst the geologists as to the origin and age of the fossil remains ; which, as we now know, demonstrate that death has been from the very first the law of all animate nature. Had Wesley been alive to-day, he would assuredly

have admitted his mistake in this particular ; and he here emphasizes that the death spoken of in the story of the Fall was essentially the death of the spirit through its separation from God.

4. But see note on Sermon XXXVIII, ii. 9.

This view of the Fall should be supplemented by the study of Sermon LIX, in which Wesley undertakes to prove that 'by the Fall of Adam mankind in general have gained a capacity, first, of being more holy and happy on earth, and secondly, of being more happy in heaven, than otherwise they could have been.'

of the beast, in sensual appetites and desires. This, then, is the foundation of the new birth,—the entire corruption of our nature. Hence it is, that, being born in sin, we must be ‘born again.’ Hence every one that is born of a woman must be born of the Spirit of God.

II. 1. But how must a man be born again? What is the nature of the new birth? This is the second question. And a question it is of the highest moment that can be conceived. We ought not, therefore, in so weighty a concern, to be content with a slight inquiry; but to examine it with all possible care, and to ponder it in our hearts, till we fully understand this important point, and clearly see how we are to be born again.

2. Not that we are to expect any minute, philosophical account of the manner how this is done. Our Lord sufficiently guards us against any such expectation, by the words immediately following the text; wherein He reminds Nicodemus of as indisputable a fact as any in the whole compass of nature, which, notwithstanding, the wisest man under the sun is not able fully to explain. ‘The wind bloweth where it listeth,’—not by thy power or wisdom; ‘and thou hearest the sound thereof,’—thou art absolutely assured, beyond all doubt, that it doth blow, ‘but thou canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth,’—the precise manner how it begins and ends, rises and falls, no man can tell. ‘So is every one that is born of the Spirit’: thou mayest be as absolutely assured of the fact, as of the blowing of the wind, but the precise manner how it is done, how the Holy Spirit works this in the soul, neither thou nor the wisest of the children of men is able to explain.

3. However, it suffices for every rational and Christian purpose, that, without descending into curious, critical inquiries, we can give a plain scriptural account of the nature

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II. 2. This passage receives additional force when it is remembered that the word for ‘wind’ and ‘spirit’ is one and the same in the Greek.

3. On this point, Edersheim (*Life of Jesus*, i. 384) says: ‘It is true that a Gentile, on becoming a proselyte, was likened to a child just born. It is also true that persons in certain

of the new birth. This will satisfy every reasonable man, who desires only the salvation of his soul. The expression, 'being born again,' was not first used by our Lord in His conversation with Nicodemus: it was well known before that time, and was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among them. When an adult Heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized, he was said to be born again, by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of His children. This expression, therefore, which Nicodemus, being 'a teacher in Israel,' ought to have understood well, our Lord uses in conversing with him; only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to. And this might be the reason of his asking, 'How can these things be?' They cannot be literally: a man cannot 'enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born' but they may, spiritually: a man may be born from above, born of God, born of the Spirit, in a manner which bears a very near analogy to the natural birth.

4. Before a child is born into the world he has eyes, but sees not; he has ears, but does not hear. He has a very imperfect use of any other sense. He has no knowledge of any of the things of the world, or any natural understanding. To that manner of existence which he then has, we do not even give the name of life. It is then only when a man is born, that we say he begins to live. For as soon as he is born, he begins to see the light, and the various objects with

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circumstances—the bridegroom on his marriage, the chief of the academy on his promotion, the king on his enthronement—were likened to those newly born.' But, he goes on to remark, in these cases the term was used as a simile, not as the expression of a fact; and the new birth was the consequence of the new relation, not its cause. Hence our Lord's meaning

was quite different; for regeneration is a fact, and it is the cause of our entrance into the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus was not only *a* Teacher, but *the* Teacher of Israel, the Chakam (Wise Man) who was regarded as the third in rank in the Sanhedrin, and sat on the left of the Nasi, or President.

which he is encompassed. His ears are then opened, and he hears the sounds which successively strike upon them. At the same time, all the other organs of sense begin to be exercised upon their proper objects. He likewise breathes, and lives in a manner wholly different from what he did before. How exactly doth the parallel hold in all these instances ! While a man is in a mere natural state, before he is born of God, he has, in a spiritual sense, eyes and sees not ; a thick impenetrable veil lies upon them : he has ears, but hears not ; he is utterly deaf to what he is most of all concerned to hear. His other spiritual senses are all locked up : he is in the same condition as if he had them not. Hence he has no knowledge of God ; no intercourse with Him ; he is not at all acquainted with Him. He has no true knowledge of the things of God, either of spiritual or eternal things , therefore, though he is a living man, he is a dead Christian. But as soon as he is born of God, there is a total change in all these particulars. The 'eyes of his understanding are opened' (such is the language of the great Apostle) ; and, He who of old 'commanded light to shine out of darkness shining on his heart, he sees the light of the glory of God,' His glorious love, 'in the face of Jesus Christ.' His ears being opened, he is now capable of hearing the inward voice of God, saying, 'Be of good cheer , thy sins are forgiven thee' , 'Go and sin no more.' This is the purport of what God speaks to his heart ; although perhaps not in these very words. He is now ready to hear whatsoever 'He that teacheth man knowledge' is pleased, from time to time, to reveal to him. He 'feels in his heart,' to use the language of our Church, 'the mighty working of the Spirit of God' ; not in a gross, carnal sense, as the men of the world stupidly and wilfully misunderstand the expression , though they have been told again and again, we

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4. Compare the working out of this analogy in Sermon XV, i.

'Feels in his heart' ; see Homily for Rogation Week, Part III : 'God give us grace, good people, to know these things and to feel them in our

hearts.' For further examples of the teaching of the Church of England on this subject, see *Farther Appeal*, v. 24-6.

As to this spiritual respiration, see Sermon XV, ii. 1.

mean thereby neither more nor less than this: he feels, is inwardly sensible of, the graces which the Spirit of God works in his heart. He feels, he is conscious of, a 'peace which passeth all understanding.' He many times feels such a joy in God as is 'unspeakable, and full of glory.' He feels 'the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him'; and all his spiritual senses are then exercised to discern spiritual good and evil. By the use of these, he is daily increasing in the knowledge of God, of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent, and of all the things pertaining to His inward kingdom. And now he may be properly said to live: God having quickened him by His Spirit, he is alive to God through Jesus Christ. He lives a life which the world knoweth not of, a 'life which is hid with Christ in God.' God is continually breathing, as it were, upon the soul; and his soul is breathing unto God. Grace is descending into his heart; and prayer and praise ascending to heaven: and by this intercourse between God and man, this fellowship with the Father and the Son, as by a kind of spiritual respiration, the life of God in the soul is sustained; and the child of God grows up, till he comes to the 'full measure of the stature of Christ.'

5. From hence it manifestly appears, what is the nature of the new birth. It is that great change which God works in the soul when He brings it into life, when He raises it from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. It is the change wrought in the whole soul by the almighty Spirit of God when it is 'created anew in Christ Jesus'; when it is 'renewed after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness'; when the love of the world is changed into the love of God; pride into humility; passion into meekness; hatred, envy, malice, into a sincere, tender, disinterested love for all mankind. In a word, it is that change whereby the earthly, sensual, devilish mind is turned into the 'mind which was in Christ Jesus.' This is the nature of the new birth: 'so is every one that is born of the Spirit.'

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5. 'So is every one that is born of the Spirit'—the text of Sermon XIV.

III. 1. It is not difficult for any who has considered these things, to see the necessity of the new birth, and to answer the third question, Wherefore, to what end, is it necessary that we should be born again? It is very easily discerned, that this is necessary, first, in order to holiness. For what is holiness according to the oracles of God? Not a bare external religion, a round of outward duties, how many soever they be, and how exactly soever performed. No: gospel holiness is no less than the image of God stamped upon the heart; it is no other than the whole mind which was in Christ Jesus; it consists of all heavenly affections and tempers mingled together in one. It implies such a continual, thankful love to Him who hath not withheld from us His Son, His only Son, as makes it natural, and in a manner necessary to us, to love every child of man, as fills us 'with bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness, long-suffering.' It is such a love of God as teaches us to be blameless in all manner of conversation; as enables us to present our souls and bodies, all we are and all we have, all our thoughts, words, and actions, a continual sacrifice to God, acceptable through Christ Jesus. Now, this holiness can have no existence till we are renewed in the image of our mind. It cannot commence in the soul till that change be wrought; till, by the power of the Highest overshadowing us, we are 'brought from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God'; that is, till we are born again; which, therefore, is absolutely necessary in order to holiness.

2. But 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' shall see the face of God in glory. Of consequence, the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to eternal salvation. Men may indeed flatter themselves (so desperately wicked and so deceitful is the heart of man!) that they may live in their sins till they come to the last gasp, and yet afterwards live with God, and thousands do really believe, that they have found a broad way which leadeth not to destruction. 'What

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III. 2. Wesley speaks in strong terms about hell; but it should be remembered that he says (Sermon LIV, 14): 'It is impossible this

danger,' say they, 'can a woman be in that is so *harmless* and so *virtuous*? What fear is there that so *honest* a man, one of so strict *morality*, should miss of heaven, especially, if, over and above all this, they constantly attend on church and sacrament?' One of these will ask with all assurance, 'What! shall not I do as well as my neighbours?' Yes, as well as your unholy neighbours; as well as your neighbours that die in their sins! For you will all drop into the pit together, into the nethermost hell! You will all lie together in the lake of fire; 'the lake of fire burning with brimstone.' Then, at length, you will see (but God grant you may see it before!) the necessity of holiness in order to glory, and, consequently, of the new birth, since none can be holy, except he be born again.

3. For the same reason, except he be born again, none can be happy even in this world. For it is not possible, in the nature of things, that a man should be happy who is not holy. Even the poor, ungodly poet could tell us, *Nemo malus felix* 'No wicked man is happy.' The reason is plain: all unholy tempers are uneasy tempers: not only malice, hatred, envy, jealousy, revenge, create a present hell in the breast, but even the softer passions, if not kept within due bounds, give a thousand times more pain than pleasure. Even 'hope,' when 'deferred' (and how often must this be the case!) 'maketh the heart sick': and every desire which is not according to the will of God is liable to 'pierce' us 'through with many sorrows': and all those general sources of sin—pride, self-will, and idolatry—are, in the same proportion as they prevail, general sources of misery. Therefore, as long as these reign in any soul, happiness has no place there. But they must reign till the bent of our nature is changed, that is, till we are born again; consequently, the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to happiness in this world, as well as in the world to come.

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should be the lot of any creature but by his own act and deed.'

3. The 'poor, ungodly poet' is Juvenal; the quotation is from *Sat.*

iv. 8: '*Nemo malus felix, minime corruptor et idem*' ('No wicked man is happy, least of all one who is also a corrupter of others').

IV I proposed in the last place to subjoin a few inferences, which naturally follow from the preceding observations.

1. And, first, it follows, that baptism is not the new birth they are not one and the same thing. Many indeed seem to imagine that they are just the same, at least, they speak as if they thought so; but I do not know that this opinion is publicly avowed by any denomination of Christians whatever. Certainly it is not by any within these kingdoms, whether of the established Church, or dissenting from it. The judgement of the latter is clearly declared in their large Catechism: Q. 'What are the parts of a sacrament? A. The parts of a sacrament are two the one an outward and sensible sign, the other, an inward and spiritual grace, thereby signified. Q. What is baptism? A. Baptism is a sacrament, wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water, to be a sign and seal of regeneration by His Spirit.' Here it is manifest, baptism, the sign, is spoken of as distinct from regeneration, the thing signified.

In the Church Catechism likewise, the judgement of our Church is declared with the utmost clearness Q. 'What meanest thou by this word, sacrament? A. I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. Q. What is the outward part or form in baptism? A. Water, wherein the person is baptized, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Q. What is the inward part, or thing signified?

IV. 1. As to the relation between Baptism and the New Birth, see introduction to Sermon XIV. Wesley's *Treatise on Baptism*, written in 1756 and published in vol. xix of the collected *Works* (vol. x in the modern editions), should also be consulted.

The only Dissenting Church in England which had any definite Confession of Faith was the Presbyterian; the Independents and Anabaptists, being organized congregationally, had no common authoritative creed. Hence Wesley quotes the Larger Catechism as representing

dissenting judgement on this subject. It was completed by the Westminster Assembly on April 14, 1648, and ratified by the Scotch General Assembly immediately afterwards. It has ever since been accepted by all the branches of the Presbyterian Church, along with the Westminster Confession and the Shorter Catechism, as their standard of doctrine.

The Anglican Catechism was first inserted in the Prayer-Book in 1549. The questions about the Sacraments were added in 1604, and were composed by Dean Overall of St. Paul's. In their present form

A. A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' Nothing, therefore, is plainer, than that, according to the Church of England, baptism is not the new birth.

But indeed the reason of the thing is so clear and evident, as not to need any other authority. For what can be more plain, than that the one is an external, the other an internal, work; that the one is a visible, the other an invisible thing, and therefore wholly different from each other?—the one being an act of man, purifying the body; the other a change wrought by God in the soul: so that the former is just as distinguishable from the latter, as the soul from the body, or water from the Holy Ghost.

2. From the preceding reflections we may, secondly, observe, that as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism they do not constantly go together. A man may possibly be 'born of water,' and yet not be 'born of the Spirit.' There may sometimes be the outward sign, where there is not the inward grace. I do not now speak with regard to infants: it is certain our Church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time born again, and it is allowed that the whole Office for the Baptism of Infants proceeds upon this supposition. Nor is it an objection of any weight against this, that we cannot comprehend how this work can be wrought in infants. For neither can we comprehend how it is wrought in a person of riper years. But whatever be the case with infants, it is sure all of riper years who are baptized are not at the same time born again. 'The tree is known by its fruits.' And hereby it appears too plain to be denied, that divers of those who were children of the devil

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they date from 1662. In the Methodist Second Catechism, the question and answer in regard to Sacraments in general is taken from the Church of England Catechism; those in regard to baptism are thus modified: Q. What is the outward and visible sign or form in baptism? A. Baptizing with water—by dipping or

pouring or sprinkling—'into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' (Matt. xxviii. 19). Q. What is the inward and spiritual grace signified? A. Our being cleansed from the guilt and defilement of sin, and receiving a new life from and in Jesus Christ.

2. See introduction to Sermon XIV.

before they were baptized continue the same after baptism ; 'for the works of their father they do' : they continue servants of sin, without any pretence either to inward or outward holiness.

3. A third inference which we may draw from what has been observed, is, that the new birth is not the same with sanctification. This is indeed taken for granted by many, particularly by an eminent writer, in his late treatise on

3. The 'eminent writer' is William Law, whose treatise on *The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration* was published in 1739. Charles Wesley read part of it to the Society on October 19, 1739, and comments, 'How promising the beginning ! How lame the conclusion !' John read it on October 23, as he was riding from Bristol to Bradford ; and characterizes it as 'philosophical, speculative, precarious ; Behmenish, void, and vain ! Oh, what a fall is there !' About 1734 Law had first made acquaintance with Boehme's mystical writings, and all his later works are tainted with their fantastic combination of physics and mysticism. Thus in this particular work he says that the eating of the apple brought 'the nature and power of the stars and elements' into man's body. The result was the kindling of a 'dark fire' in his soul, which had to be quenched by the blood of Christ. Regeneration is the planting of a 'seed of life' in man, which gradually grows and develops into a full-grown tree ; it is 'not to be considered as a thing done, but as a state that is progressive, or as a thing that is continually doing.' We are not to seek for, or rest in, any assurance of this change having taken place, but to base our confidence on 'naked faith.' Conversion 'is often very sudden and instantaneous' ; but 'this sudden-

ness of change, or flash of conviction, is by no means of the essence of true conversion.' In any case, 'the purification of our souls, or the renewal of our first birth and state, is something entirely distinct from this sudden conversion ; it is a certain process, a gradual release from our captivity and disorder, consisting of several stages and degrees.'

All this is very sound, and quite in harmony with the teaching of recent students of the psychology of the Christian life. Wesley, judging from his own experience of the conversion of people who had been open sinners, or at least wholly indifferent to religion, made the unwarranted generalization that *all* conversions must be of the sudden, instantaneous type ; but we have come to see that this is only one of the ways in which conversion takes place, and that in the case of those brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord it is often a gradual work, and its subjects are not able to fix any definite moment when it was first realized.

It is true that Mr. Law, and Wesley himself, in his earlier sermons, confused regeneration with sanctification ; though Mr. Law states clearly that purification is quite distinct from the first sudden conversion ; but he does equate purification with the renewal of our first birth. Speaking in terms of exact scientific

the nature and grounds of Christian Regeneration. To waive several other weighty objections which might be made to that tract, this is a palpable one: it all along speaks of regeneration as a progressive work, carried on in the soul by slow degrees, from the time of our first turning to God. This is undeniably true of sanctification, but of regeneration, the new birth, it is not true. This is a part of sanctification, not the whole, it is the gate to it, the entrance into it. When we are born again, then our sanctification, our inward and outward holiness begins, and thenceforward we are gradually to 'grow up in Him who is our Head.' This expression of the Apostle admirably illustrates the difference between one and the other, and farther points out the exact analogy there is between natural and spiritual things. A child is born of a woman in a moment, or at least in a very short time afterward he gradually and slowly grows, till he attains to the stature of a man. In like manner, a child is born of God in a short time, if not in a moment. But it is by slow degrees that he afterward grows up to the measure of the full stature of Christ. The same relation, therefore, which there is between our natural birth and our growth, there is also between our new birth and our sanctification.

4. One point more we may learn from the preceding observations. But it is a point of so great importance, as may

theology, regeneration is the impartation of the new life, which in the nature of things must be done at some definite moment; sanctification is a process of growth into perfect health and efficiency, of which regeneration is the starting-point. But this is, after all, a matter of terminology to a large extent; and Mr. Law's treatise, apart from its fantastical mysticism, is a most useful practical treatment of the subject, and does not deserve Wesley's severe criticism.

'Grow up in Him.' Wesley missed a good point here; the correct translation is 'Grow up in

all things *into* Him, who is the head, even Christ.' When a child is born, the movements of its various limbs are mostly independent of the brain; the child develops by gradually bringing all these movements under voluntary control; the arms and legs and tongue *grow up into the brain*, or head, through the gradual rendering viable of their nervous connexions with the central organ—an excellent analogy to the bringing of every thought into obedience to Christ.

4. Compare Sermon XIV, iv. 3.

'Eight days old.' It was very customary to bring infants to

excuse the considering it the more carefully, and prosecuting it at some length. What must one who loves the souls of men, and is grieved that any of them should perish, say to one whom he sees living in Sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, or any other wilful sin? What can he say, if the foregoing observations are true, but 'You must be born again'? 'No,' says a zealous man, 'that cannot be: how can you talk so uncharitably to the man? Has he not been baptized already? He cannot be born again now.' Can he not be born again? Do you affirm this? Then he cannot be saved. Though he be as old as Nicodemus was, yet 'except he be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Therefore in saying, 'He cannot be born again,' you in effect deliver him over to damnation. And where lies the uncharitableness now? on my side, or on yours? I say, he may be born again, and so become an heir of salvation. You say, 'He cannot be born again:' and if so, he must inevitably perish! So you utterly block up his way to salvation, and send him to hell, out of mere charity!

But perhaps the sinner himself, to whom in real charity we say, 'You must be born again,' has been taught to say, 'I defy your new doctrine: I need not be born again, I was born again when I was baptized. What! would you have me deny my baptism?' I answer, first, there is nothing under heaven which can excuse a lie, otherwise I should say to an open sinner, 'If you have been baptized, do not own it. For how highly does this aggravate your guilt! How will it increase your damnation! Was you devoted to God at eight days old, and have you been all these years devoting yourself to the devil? Was you, even before you had the use of reason, consecrated to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost? And have you, ever since you had the use of it, been flying in the face of God, and consecrating yourself to Satan? Does the abomination of desolation—the love of the

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baptism at eight days old, because circumcision, which is the type of baptism, was performed amongst the Jews on the eighth day after birth;

and the fact that our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day doubtless influenced Christian practice.

world, pride, anger, lust, foolish desire, and a whole train of vile affections—stand where it ought not? Have you set up all these accursed things in that soul which was once a temple of the Holy Ghost; set apart for an ‘habitation of God, through the Spirit’, yea, solemnly given up to Him? And do you glory in this, that you once belonged to God? O be ashamed! blush! hide yourself in the earth! Never boast more of what ought to fill you with confusion, to make you ashamed before God and man! I answer, secondly, you have already denied your baptism, and that in the most effectual manner. You have denied it a thousand and a thousand times; and you do so still, day by day. For in your baptism you renounced the devil and all his works. Whenever, therefore, you give place to him again, whenever you do any of the works of the devil, then you deny your baptism. Therefore you deny it by every wilful sin; by every act of uncleanness, drunkenness, or revenge; by every obscene or profane word; by every oath that comes out of your mouth. Every time you profane the day of the Lord, you thereby deny your baptism; yea, every time you do anything to another which you would not he should do to you. I answer, thirdly, be you baptized or unbaptized, you must be born again; otherwise it is not possible you should be inwardly holy; and without inward as well as outward holiness, you cannot be happy, even in this world, much less in the world to come. Do you say, ‘Nay, but I do no harm to any man; I am honest and just in all my dealings; I do not curse, or take the Lord’s name in vain; I do not profane the Lord’s day; I am no drunkard; I do not slander my neighbour, nor live in any wilful sin’? If this be so, it were much to be wished that all men went as far as you do. But you must go farther yet, or you cannot be saved: still ‘you must be born again.’ Do you add, ‘I do go farther yet; for I not only do no harm, but do all the good I can’? I doubt that fact: I fear you have had a thousand opportunities of doing good which you have suffered to pass by unimproved, and for which therefore you are accountable to God. But if you had improved them all, if you really had done all the

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good you possibly could to all men, yet this does not at all alter the case, still 'you must be born again.' Without this nothing will do any good to your poor, sinful, polluted soul. 'Nay, but I constantly attend all the ordinances of God: I keep to my church and sacrament.' It is well you do; but all this will not keep you from hell, except you be born again. Go to church twice a day; go to the Lord's table every week; say ever so many prayers in private; hear ever so many good sermons; read ever so many good books, still 'you must be born again': none of these things will stand in the place of the new birth; no, nor anything under heaven. Let this, therefore, if you have not already experienced this inward work of God, be your continual prayer: 'Lord, add this to all Thy blessings,—let me be born again! Deny whatever Thou pleasest, but deny not this, let me be "born from above"! Take away whatsoever seemeth Thee good—reputation, fortune, friends, health—only give me this, to be born of the Spirit, to be received among the children of God! Let me be born, "not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"; and then let me daily "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"

## SERMON XL

### THE WILDERNESS STATE

ON March 28, 1740, the *Journal* records: 'From these words, "Then was Jesus led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil," I took occasion to describe that wilderness state, that state of doubts, and fears, and strong temptations, which so many go through, though in different degrees, after they have received remission of sins.' The first note of John xvi. 22 as a text is in the Sermon Register for March 1, 1751, at Westminster; the sermon was repeated at Snowsfields on May 25, and at West Street on May 30. It is mentioned five times more in 1751, twenty-one times in 1752, four times in 1753, once in 1754, once in 1755, and once in 1756. It seems then to have been laid aside, until it was published in Vol. IV of the Sermons in 1760. It was in part a criticism of Law's *Spirit of Prayer*, which was published in 1749 and in a second edition in 1752.

The best introduction to the sermon is Wesley's account of his own experience in his *Journal* for January 4, 1739, more than six months after his conversion. 'My friends affirm I am mad, because I said I was not a Christian a year ago. I affirm I am not a Christian now. Indeed, what I might have been I know not, had I been faithful to the grace then given, when, expecting nothing less, I received such a sense of the forgiveness of my sins as till then I never knew. But that I am not a Christian at this day I as assuredly know as that Jesus is the Christ.' He goes on to say that he has not any love of God—'I do not love either the Father or the Son'; that he still loves the world, and takes more pleasure in it than in God; that he has no abiding joy in the Holy Ghost; and that he has not the peace of God. He concludes, 'I have not the fruits of the Spirit of Christ. Though I have constantly used all the means of grace for twenty years, I am not a Christian.' He records many similar cases in his *Journal* of periods of deep depression following on conversion. What he did not recognize is that this is the result of the working of a psychological law, that it is impossible to have a high wave of emotional excitement without a correspondingly deep trough of subsequent depression. 'Nervous energy, when directed vigorously in a certain way, completely expends itself, and must then have a period of recuperation'

(Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, p. 357). Starbuck found that in 93 per cent. of women and 77 per cent. of men there was a lapse after conversion into inactivity and indifference, or storm and stress, or doubt; though it was only in 5 and 7 per cent. respectively of these cases that the relapse was permanent. Where the conversion had been of the instantaneous type, the relapses were more frequent by 10 per cent.; as indeed one would expect. The relapse may be attended or preceded by conscious neglect of duty or commission of sin; or it may be purely a state of nervous depression: these two conditions Wesley distinguishes as darkness and heaviness respectively, and deals with them separately in this and the following sermon. It is doubtful how far it would be possible to discriminate exactly between the two conditions in all cases; but broadly, Wesley's distinction is sound, and his practical directions are both scriptural and sensible.

The analogy between the early history of Israel and the development of the Christian life struck many of the old commentators. The bondage in Egypt corresponds to the natural life before conversion, the crossing of the Red Sea to baptism and conversion, the wanderings in the wilderness to the period of doubt and conflict following conversion, and the entrance into the Promised Land to the attainment of perfect love and stability. For example, Samuel Mather, in *Types of the Old Testament* (2nd ed. 1705), p. 158, says: "The marching through the wilderness was typical of the wilderness of an unregenerate condition"; and it prefigures 'troubles, difficulties, temptations, in the way to heaven.' Burrough, in *Holy Courage*, makes the same application of the story.

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*Ye now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*—JOHN xvi. 22.

I. AFTER God had wrought a great deliverance for Israel, by bringing them out of the house of bondage, they did not immediately enter into the land which He had promised to their fathers; but 'wandered out of the way in the wilderness,' and were variously tempted and distressed. In like manner, after God has delivered them that fear Him from the bondage of sin and Satan, after they are 'justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus,' yet not many of them immediately enter into 'the rest which remaineth for the people of God.' The greater part of them wander, more or less, out of the good way into which He

hath brought them. They come, as it were, into a 'waste and howling desert,' where they are variously tempted and tormented: and this, some, in allusion to the case of the Israelites, have termed 'a wilderness state.'

2. Certain it is, that the condition wherein these are has a right to the tenderest compassion. They labour under an evil and sore disease; though one that is not commonly understood, and for this very reason it is the more difficult for them to find a remedy. Being in darkness themselves, they cannot be supposed to understand the nature of their own disorder; and few of their brethren, nay, perhaps, of their teachers, know either what their sickness is, or how to heal it. So much the more need there is to inquire, first, what is the nature of this disease? secondly, what is the cause? and, thirdly, what is the cure of it?

I. 1. And, first, what is the nature of this disease, into which so many fall after they have believed? Wherein does it properly consist? and what are the genuine symptoms of it? It properly consists in the loss of that faith which God once wrought in their heart. They that are *in the wilderness* have not now that divine 'evidence,' that satisfactory conviction, 'of things not seen,' which they once enjoyed. They have not now that inward demonstration of the Spirit which before enabled each of them to say, 'The life I live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.' The light of heaven does not now 'shine in their hearts,' neither do they 'see Him that is invisible'; but darkness is again on the face of their souls, and blindness on the eyes of their understanding. The Spirit no longer 'witnesses with their spirits, that they are the children of God': neither does He continue as the Spirit of adoption, 'crying' in their hearts, 'Abba, Father.' They have not now a sure trust in His love, and a liberty of approaching Him with holy boldness. 'Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him,' is no more the language of their heart; but they are shorn of their strength, and become weak and feeble-minded, even as other men.

2. Hence, secondly, proceeds the loss of love ; which cannot but rise or fall, at the same time, and in the same proportion, with true, living faith. Accordingly, they that are deprived of their faith, are deprived of the love of God also. They cannot now say, ' Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.' They are not now happy in God, as every one is that truly loves Him. They do not delight in Him as in time past, and ' smell the odour of His ointments.' Once, all their ' desire was unto Him, and to the remembrance of His name ' ; but now even their desires are cold and dead, if not utterly extinguished. And as their love of God is waxed cold, so is also their love of their neighbour. They have not now that zeal for the souls of men, that longing after their welfare, that fervent, restless, active desire of their being reconciled to God. They do not feel those ' bowels of mercies ' for the sheep that are lost, that tender ' compassion for the ignorant, and them that are out of the way.' Once they were ' gentle toward all men,' meekly instructing such as opposed the truth ; and, ' if any was overtaken in a fault, restoring such an one in the spirit of meekness ' : but, after a suspense, perhaps of many days, anger begins to regain its power ; yea, peevishness and impatience thrust sore at them that they may fall ; and it is well if they are not sometimes driven, even to ' render evil for evil, and railing for railing.'

3. In consequence of the loss of faith and love, follows, thirdly, loss of joy in the Holy Ghost. For if the loving consciousness of pardon be no more, the joy resulting therefrom cannot remain. If the Spirit does not witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, the joy that flowed from the inward witness must also be at an end. And, in like manner, they who once ' rejoiced with joy unspeakable,' ' in hope of the glory of God,' now they are deprived of that ' hope full of immortality,' are deprived of the joy it occasioned ; as also of that which resulted from a consciousness of ' the love of God,' then ' shed abroad in their hearts.' For the cause being removed, so is the effect, the fountain being dammed up, those living waters spring no more to refresh the thirsty soul.

4. With loss of faith, and love, and joy, there is also joined, fourthly, the loss of that 'peace which' once passed 'all understanding.' That sweet tranquillity of mind, that composure of spirit, is gone. Painful doubt returns, doubt, whether we ever did, and perhaps whether we ever shall, believe. We begin to doubt, whether we ever did find in our hearts the real testimony of the Spirit; whether we did not rather deceive our own souls, and mistake the voice of nature for the voice of God, nay, and perhaps, whether we shall ever hear His voice, and find favour in His sight. And these doubts are again joined with servile fear, with that fear which hath torment. We fear the wrath of God, even as before we believed: we fear, lest we should be cast out of His presence, and thence sink again into that fear of death, from which we were before wholly delivered.

5. But even this is not all; for loss of peace is accompanied with loss of power. We know every one who has peace with God, through Jesus Christ, has power over all sin. But whenever he loses the peace of God, he loses also the power over sin. While that peace remained, power also remained, even over the besetting sin, whether it were the sin of his nature, of his constitution, [the sin] of his education, or his profession, yea, and over those evil tempers and desires which, till then, he could not conquer. Sin had then no more dominion over him; but he hath now no more dominion over sin. He may struggle, indeed, but he cannot overcome, the crown is fallen from his head. His enemies again prevail over him, and, more or less, bring him into bondage. The glory is departed from him, even the kingdom of God which was in his heart. He is dispossessed of righteousness, as well as of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

II. 1. Such is the nature of what many have termed, and not improperly, 'the wilderness state.' But the nature of it may be more fully understood by inquiring, secondly, What are the causes of it? These, indeed, are various. But I dare

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II. par. 1. See Sermon XLI, iii. 7, and note.

not rank among these the bare, arbitrary, sovereign will of God. He 'rejoiceth in the prosperity of His servants. He delighteth not to afflict or grieve the children of men.' His invariable will is our sanctification, attended with 'peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.' These are His own free gifts; and we are assured 'the gifts of God are,' on His part, 'without repentance.' He never repenteth of what He hath given, or desires to withdraw them from us. Therefore He never *deserts* us, as some speak: it is we only that *desert* Him.

(i.) 2. The most usual cause of inward darkness is *sin*, of one kind or another. This it is which generally occasions what is often a complication of sin and misery. And, first, sin of commission. This may frequently be observed to darken the soul in a moment; especially if it be a known, a wilful, or presumptuous sin. If, for instance, a person, who is now walking in the clear light of God's countenance should be any way prevailed on to commit a single act of drunkenness, or uncleanness, it would be no wonder if in that very hour he fell into utter darkness. It is true, there have been some very rare cases, wherein God has prevented this, by an extraordinary display of His pardoning mercy, almost in the very instant. But in general, such an abuse of the goodness of God, so gross an insult on His love, occasions an immediate estrangement from God, and a 'darkness that may be felt.'

3. But it may be hoped this case is not very frequent, that there are not many who so despise the riches of His goodness as, while they walk in His light, so grossly and presumptuously to rebel against Him. That light is much more frequently lost by giving way to sins of omission. This, indeed, does not immediately quench the Spirit, but gradually and slowly. The former may be compared to pouring water upon a fire, the latter, to withdrawing the fuel from it. And many times will that loving Spirit reprove our neglect, before He departs from us. Many are the inward checks, the secret notices, He gives, before His influences are withdrawn. So that only a train of omissions, wilfully persisted in, can bring us into utter darkness.

4. Perhaps no sin of omission more frequently occasions

this than the neglect of private prayer ; the want whereof cannot be supplied by any other ordinance whatever. Nothing can be more plain, than that the life of God in the soul does not continue, much less increase, unless we use all opportunities of communion with God, and pouring out our hearts before Him. If, therefore, we are negligent of this, if we suffer business, company, or any avocation whatever, to prevent these secret exercises of the soul (or, which comes to the same thing, to make us hurry them over in a slight and careless manner), that life will surely decay. And if we long or frequently intermit them, it will gradually die away.

5. Another sin of omission, which frequently brings the soul of a believer into darkness, is the neglect of what was so strongly enjoined, even under the Jewish dispensation : ' Thou shalt, in any wise, rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him : thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart.' Now, if we do hate our brother in our heart, if we do not rebuke him when we see him in a fault, but suffer sin upon him, this will soon bring leanness into our own soul ; seeing hereby we are partakers of his sin. By neglecting to reprove our neighbour, we make his sin our own : we become accountable for it to God : we saw his danger, and gave him no warning : so, ' if he perish in his iniquity,' God may justly require ' his blood at our hands.' No wonder then, if by thus grieving the Spirit, we lose the light of His countenance.

6. A third cause of our losing this is, the giving way to some kind of inward sin. For example : we know, every one that is ' proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord ', and that, although this pride of heart should not appear in the outward conversation. Now, how easily may a soul filled with peace and joy fall into this snare of the devil ! How natural is it for him to imagine that he has more grace, more wisdom or strength, than he really has ! to ' think more highly of himself than he ought to think ' ! How natural to glory in something he has received, as if he had not received it ! But seeing God continually ' resisteth the proud, and giveth grace ' only ' to the humble,' this must certainly obscure, if not wholly destroy, the light which before shone on his heart.

7. The same effect may be produced by giving place to anger, whatever the provocation or occasion be ; yea, though it were coloured over with the name of ' zeal for the truth,' or ' for the glory of God.' Indeed, all zeal which is any other than the flame of love is ' earthly, animal, and devilish.' It is the flame of wrath : it is flat, sinful anger, neither better nor worse. And nothing is a greater enemy to the mild, gentle love of God than this : they never did, they never can, subsist together in one breast. In the same proportion as this prevails, love and joy in the Holy Ghost decrease. This is particularly observable in the case of *offence* , I mean, anger at any of our brethren, at any of those who are united with us either by civil or religious ties. If we give way to the spirit of offence but one hour, we lose the sweet influences of the Holy Spirit , so that, instead of amending them, we destroy ourselves, and become an easy prey to any enemy that assaults us.

8. But suppose we are aware of this snare of the devil, we may be attacked from another quarter. When fierceness and anger are asleep, and love alone is waking, we may be no less endangered by desire, which equally tends to darken the soul. This is the sure effect of any foolish desire, any vain or inordinate affection. If we set our affection on things of the earth, on any person or thing under the sun , if we desire anything but God, and what tends to God , if we seek happiness in any creature , the jealous God will surely contend with us, for He can admit of no rival. And if we will not hear His warning

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7. ' Offence ' in the ' scriptural usage means a stumbling-block, an occasion of sin or doubt ; but here it is used in a rather peculiar sense, meaning ' being offended or angered.'

8. ' If we desire anything but God,' &c. This is put far too strongly, and may easily be misunderstood. St. John puts it better : ' No man hath ever seen God. If we love one another, God abideth in us, and His love is perfected in us.' The only way in which our love to God

can find practical manifestation is in love to our fellow men ; and we cannot love them too well, unless we let our love for them lead us into sin. So we are not forbidden to find pleasure in those things which God has given to us richly for our enjoyment ; so long as we recognize in them all the goodness of God, and offer Him thanks. The idea suggested, that God is jealous of all other objects of our love, is dishonouring to Him.

voice, and return unto Him with our whole soul, if we continue to grieve Him with our idols, and running after other gods, we shall soon be cold, barren, and dry ; and the god of this world will blind and darken our hearts.

9. But this he frequently does, even when we do not give way to any positive sin. It is enough, it gives him sufficient advantage, if we do not 'stir up the gift of God which is in us', if we do not agonize continually 'to enter in at the strait gate'; if we do not earnestly 'strive for the mastery,' and 'take the kingdom of heaven by violence.' There needs no more than not to fight, and we are sure to be conquered. Let us only be careless or 'faint in our mind,' let us be easy and indolent, and our natural darkness will soon return, and overspread our soul. It is enough, therefore, if we give way to spiritual sloth; this will effectually darken the soul: it will as surely destroy the light of God, if not so swiftly, as murder or adultery.

10. But it is well to be observed, that the cause of our darkness (whatsoever it be, whether omission or commission, whether inward or outward sin) is not always nigh at hand. Sometimes the sin which occasioned the present distress may lie at a considerable distance. It might be committed days, or weeks, or months before. And that God now withdraws His light and peace on account of what was done so long ago, is not (as one might at first imagine) an instance of His severity, but rather a proof of His long-suffering and tender

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9. 'The mastery' literally means 'the victory in an athletic contest.' After St. Paul had been at Corinth, and, presumably, seen the Isthmian Games, there is hardly an epistle of his in which he does not refer to them in some way or other as an illustration of the Christian life.

Matt. xi. 12 is a difficult passage; the best interpretation seems to be that since the time of the Baptist's preaching, the kingdom of heaven, the Messianic kingdom, has been violently attacked and seized upon

for political purposes by men who wish to triumph by force. They had no time for a kingdom of inward righteousness, coming not with observation; they wanted to seize upon Christ and make Him king; and under His leadership revolt against the Romans. The word translated 'violent men' can hardly mean 'men of energy and determination'; it must mean men who believe in physical force, and are ready to exercise it for the promotion of the Messianic kingdom.

mercy. He waited all this time, if haply we would see, acknowledge, and correct what was amiss; and, in default of this, He at length shows His displeasure, if thus, at last He may bring us to repentance.

(ii.) 1. Another general cause of this darkness is *ignorance*; which is likewise of various kinds. If men know not the Scriptures, if they imagine there are passages either in the Old or New Testament which assert, that all believers, without exception, must sometimes be in darkness; this ignorance will naturally bring upon them the darkness which they expect. And how common a case has this been among us! How few are there that do not expect it! And no wonder, seeing they are taught to expect it, seeing their guides lead them into this way. Not only the mystic writers of the Romish Church, but many of the most spiritual and experimental in our own (very few of the last century excepted), lay it down with all assurance, as a plain, unquestionable scripture doctrine, and cite many texts to prove it.

2. Ignorance also of the work of God in the soul frequently occasions this darkness. Men imagine (because so they have been taught, particularly by writers of the Romish communion, whose plausible assertions too many Protestants have received without due examination) that they are not always to walk in *luminous faith*; that this is only a *lower dispensation*; that as they rise higher, they are to leave those *sensible comforts*, and to live by *naked faith* (*naked*, indeed, if it be stripped both of love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!), that a state of light and joy is good, but a state of darkness and dryness is better; that it is by these alone we can be purified from pride, love of the world, and inordinate self-love; and that, therefore, we ought neither

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(ii) 1. See Sermon XLI, iii. 8. These Mystic writers, e.g. Henri Suso, the Spanish Mystics, St. Juan of the Cross, and later, Boehme and William Law, taught the necessity and value of periods of darkness in the development of the highest spiritual life, during which the soul must live by

'naked faith'—faith which has no support from joyful experiences of the presence of God. But they did not mean what Wesley means by 'darkness,' namely, the loss of God's favour through sin; but rather what he calls heaviness, and deals with in the next sermon.

to expect nor desire to walk in the light always. Hence it is (though other reasons may concur), that the main body of pious men in the Romish Church generally walk in a dark uncomfortable way, and if ever they receive soon lose the light of God.

(iii.) 1. A third general cause of this darkness is *temptation*. When the candle of the Lord first shines on our head, temptation frequently flees away, and totally disappears. All is calm within, perhaps without too, while God makes our enemies to be at peace with us. It is then very natural to suppose that we shall not see war any more. And there are instances wherein this calm has continued, not only for weeks, but for months or years. But commonly it is otherwise in a short time 'the winds blow, the rains descend, and the floods arise' anew. They who know not either the Son or the Father, and consequently hate His children, when God slackens the bridle which is in their teeth, will show that hatred in various instances. As of old, 'he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now', the same cause still producing the same effect. The evil which yet remains in the heart will then also move afresh; anger, and many other roots of bitterness, will endeavour to spring up. At the same time, Satan will not be wanting to cast in his fiery darts, and the soul will have to wrestle, not only with the world, not only 'with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with wicked spirits in high places.' Now, when so various assaults are made at once, and perhaps with the utmost violence, it is not strange if it should occasion, not only heaviness, but even darkness in a weak believer,—more especially, if he was not watching; if these assaults are made in an hour when he looked not for them; if he expected nothing less, but had fondly told himself 'the day of evil would return no more.'

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(iii.) 1. 'In high places'; more exactly 'in the heavenly places'; the evil spirits being supposed by the Jews to have their local habita-

tion in the air, the first heaven; hence St. Paul calls the devil 'the prince of the power of the air.'

2. The force of those temptations which arise from within will be exceedingly heightened if we before thought too highly of ourselves, as if we had been cleansed from all sin. And how naturally do we imagine this during the warmth of our first love! How ready are we to believe that God has 'fulfilled in us the' whole 'work of faith with power'; that because we *feel* no sin, we *have* none in us; but the soul is all love! And well may a sharp attack from an enemy whom we supposed to be not only conquered but slain, throw us into much heaviness of soul; yea, sometimes, into utter darkness: particularly when we *reason* with this enemy, instead of instantly calling upon God, and casting ourselves upon Him, by simple faith, who 'alone knoweth how to deliver' His 'out of temptation.'

III. These are the usual causes of this second darkness. Inquire we, thirdly, what is the cure of it?

1. To suppose that this is one and the same in all cases, is a great and fatal mistake, and yet extremely common, even among many who pass for experienced Christians, yea, perhaps, take upon them to be teachers in Israel, to be the guides of other souls. Accordingly, they know and use but one medicine, whatever be the cause of the distemper. They begin immediately to apply the promises, to *preach the gospel*, as they call it. To give comfort, is the single point at which they aim, in order to which they say many soft and tender things, concerning the love of God to poor, helpless sinners, and the efficacy of the blood of Christ. Now this is *quackery* indeed, and that of the worst sort, as it tends, if not to kill

III. 1. Wesley is thinking of the preaching of the Moravians and of those in his societies who had been infected by their Antinomian tendencies. They denied the necessity of good works, and preached a doctrine of faith apart from works, the mischief of which Wesley saw very clearly in its effect on the lives of those who embraced it.

A quacksalver, abbreviated to

'quack,' is one who quacks, or boasts noisily, of the efficacy of his nostrums and salves; the older word was 'mountebank,' which at first was used of the Italian travelling physicians, who used to mount on a bench or portable stage, and vend their drugs. See, for a vivid description of one of them, Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, ii. 1. The term was often abusively applied to Wesley and his

men's bodies, yet, without the peculiar mercy of God, 'to destroy both their bodies and souls in hell.' It is hard to speak of these 'daubers with untempered mortar,' these promise-mongers, as they deserve. They well deserve the title, which has been ignorantly given to others: they are *spiritual mountebanks*. They do, in effect, make 'the blood of the covenant an unholy thing.' They vilely prostitute the promises of God, by thus applying them to all without distinction. Whereas, indeed, the cure of spiritual, as of bodily, diseases must be as various as are the causes of them. The first thing, therefore, is, to find out the cause, and this will naturally point out the cure.

2. For instance: is it sin which occasions darkness? What sin? Is it outward sin of any kind? Does your conscience accuse you of committing any sin, whereby you grieve the Holy Spirit of God? Is it on this account that He is departed from you, and that joy and peace are departed with Him? And how can you expect they should return, till you put away the accursed thing? 'Let the wicked forsake his way', 'cleanse your hands, ye sinners'; 'put away the evil of your doings'; so shall your 'light break out of obscurity'; the Lord will return and 'abundantly pardon.'

3. If, upon the closest search, you can find no sin of commission which causes the cloud upon your soul, inquire next, if there be not some sin of omission which separates between God and you. Do you 'not suffer sin upon your brother'? Do you reprove them that sin in your sight? Do you walk in all the ordinances of God? in public, family, private prayer? If not, if you habitually neglect any one of these known duties,

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preachers. Thus Bishop Lavington, in his *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, Pt. II (1749), says: 'The mountebank's infallible prescriptions must be swallowed, whatever be the consequence, though they die for it.'

'The cure of spiritual diseases must be as various as are the causes of them'—a very wise and often disregarded proposition. It would be

an excellent thing to institute in our theological colleges a course of spiritual therapeutics, illustrated and applied in a sort of clinic in connexion with some church or mission centre. The analogy between medical and theological training is one which might be profitably considered in the arrangement of the work in our Institutions.

how can you expect that the light of His countenance should continue to shine upon you? Make haste to 'strengthen the things that remain', then your soul shall live. 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice,' by His grace supply what is lacking. When you hear a voice behind you saying, 'This is the way, walk thou in it,' harden not your heart; be no more 'disobedient to the heavenly calling.' Till the sin, whether of omission or commission, be removed, all comfort is false and deceitful. It is only skinning the wound over, which still festers and rankles beneath. Look for no peace within, till you are at peace with God; which cannot be without 'fruits meet for repentance.'

4. But perhaps you are not conscious of even any sin of omission which impairs your peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Is there not, then, some inward sin, which, as a root of bitterness, springs up in your heart to trouble you? Is not your dryness and barrenness of soul occasioned by your heart's 'departing from the living God'? Has not 'the foot of pride come against' you? Have you not thought of yourself 'more highly than you ought to think'? Have you not, in any respect, 'sacrificed to your own net, and burned incense to your own drag'? Have you not ascribed your success in any undertaking to your own courage, or strength, or wisdom? Have you not boasted of something 'you have received, as though you had not received it'? Have you not gloried in anything, 'save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ'? Have you not sought after or desired the praise of men? Have you not taken pleasure in it? 'If so, you see the way you are to take. If you have fallen by pride, 'humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time.' Have you not forced Him to depart from you, by giving place to anger? Have you not 'fretted yourself because of the ungodly'? or 'been envious against the evil-doers'? Have you not been offended at any of your brethren, looking at their (real or imagined) sin, so as to sin yourself against the great law of love, by estranging your heart from them? Then look unto the Lord, that you may renew your strength; that

all this sharpness and coldness may be done away, that love, and peace, and joy may return together, and you may be invariably kind to each other, and 'tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' Have not you given way to any foolish desire? to any kind or degree of inordinate affection? How then can the love of God have place in your heart, till you put away your idols? 'Be not deceived: God is not mocked': He will not dwell in a divided heart. As long, therefore, as you cherish Delilah in your bosom, He has no place there. It is vain to hope for a recovery of His light, till you pluck out the right eye, and cast it from you. O let there be no longer delay! Cry to Him, that He may enable you so to do! Bewail your own impotence and helplessness, and, the Lord being your helper, enter in at the strait gate take the kingdom of heaven by violence! Cast out every idol from His sanctuary, and the glory of the Lord shall soon appear.

5. Perhaps it is this very thing, the want of striving, spiritual sloth, which keeps your soul in darkness. You dwell at ease in the land; there is no war in your coasts; and so you are quiet and unconcerned. You go on in the same even track of outward duties, and are content there to abide. And do you wonder, meantime, that your soul is dead? O stir yourself up before the Lord! Arise, and shake yourself from the dust; wrestle with God for the mighty blessing; pour out your soul unto God in prayer, and continue therein with all perseverance! Watch! Awake out of sleep; and keep awake!—otherwise there is nothing to be expected, but that you will be alienated more and more from the light and life of God.

6. If, upon the fullest and most impartial examination of yourself, you cannot discern that you at present give way either to spiritual sloth, or any other inward or outward sin, then call to mind the time that is past. Consider your former tempers, words, and actions. Have these been right before the Lord? 'Commune with Him in your chamber, and be still'; and desire of Him to try the ground of your heart, and bring to your remembrance whatever has at any

time offended the eyes of His glory. If the guilt of any unrepented sin remain on your soul, it cannot be but you will remain in darkness, till, having been renewed by repentance, you are again washed by faith in 'the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness.'

7. Entirely different will be the manner of the cure, if the cause of the disease be not sin, but ignorance. It may be ignorance of the meaning of Scripture; perhaps occasioned by ignorant commentators—ignorant, at least, in this respect, however knowing and learned they may be in other particulars. And, in this case, that ignorance must be removed before we can remove the darkness arising from it. We must show the true meaning of those texts which have been misunderstood. My design does not permit me to consider all the passages of Scripture which have been pressed into this service. I shall just mention two or three, which are frequently brought to prove, that all believers must, sooner or later, 'walk in darkness.'

8. One of these is Isa. l. 10: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' But how does it appear, either from the text or context, that the person here spoken of ever had light? One who is convinced of sin 'feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of His servant.' And him we should advise, though he was still dark of soul, and had never seen the light of God's countenance, yet to 'trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.' This text, therefore, proves nothing less than that a believer in Christ 'must sometimes *walk in darkness*.'

8. Matthew Henry on this passage says: 'It is no new thing for the children and heirs of light sometimes to walk in darkness, and for a time not to have any glimpse or gleam of light. They walk in darkness when their evidences for heaven are clouded, their joy in God interrupted, the testimony of the Spirit is suspended,

and the light of God's countenance eclipsed.' This is just what Wesley means by heaviness, and is treated in the next sermon. Certainly the passage does not prove the *necessity* of periods of darkness, but it implies their *possibility*. Wesley's suggestion that it refers to persons under conviction is not at all natural.

9. Another text which has been supposed to speak the same doctrine is Hos. ii. 14: 'I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.' Hence it has been inferred, that God will bring every believer *into the wilderness*, into a state of deadness and darkness. But it is certain, the text speaks no such thing; for it does not appear that it speaks of particular believers at all: it manifestly refers to the Jewish nation; and, perhaps, to that only. But if it be applicable to particular persons, the plain meaning of it is this: I will draw him by love; I will next convince him of sin; and then comfort him by My pardoning mercy.

10. A third scripture, from whence the same inference has been drawn, is that above recited, 'Ye now have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.' This has been supposed to imply, that God would, after a time, withdraw Himself from all believers, and that they could not, till after they had thus sorrowed, have the joy which no man could take from them. But the whole context shows, that our Lord is here speaking personally to the Apostles, and no others; and that He is speaking concerning those particular events, His own death and resurrection. 'A little while,' says He, 'and ye shall not see Me,' namely, whilst I am in the grave: 'and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me'; when I am risen from the dead. 'Ye will weep and lament, and the world will rejoice: but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.' 'Ye now have sorrow,' because I am about to be taken from your head, 'but I will see you again,' after My resurrection, 'and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy,' which I will then give you, 'no man taketh from you.' All this we know was literally fulfilled in the particular case of the Apostles. But no inference can be drawn from hence with regard to God's dealings with believers in general.

11. A fourth text (to mention no more), which has been

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9. The passage is Hosea ii. 16 (not 14). The reference is almost certainly to the captivity in Babylon; as Wesley says, 'It manifestly

refers to the Jewish nation,' not to individual believers.

11. Wesley's interpretation is undoubtedly right; though the fiery

frequently cited in proof of the same doctrine, is 1 Pet. iv. 12 : 'Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you.' But this is full as foreign to the point as the preceding. The text, literally rendered, runs thus : 'Beloved, wonder not at the burning which is among you, which is for your trial.' Now, however this may be accommodated to inward trials, in a secondary sense ; yet, primarily, it doubtless refers to martyrdom, and the sufferings connected with it. Neither, therefore, is this text anything at all to the purpose for which it is cited. And we may challenge all men to bring one text, either from the Old or New Testament, which is any more to the purpose than this.

12. 'But is not darkness much more profitable for the soul than light ? Is not the work of God in the heart most swiftly and effectually carried on during a state of inward suffering ? Is not a believer more swiftly and thoroughly purified by sorrow, than by joy ?—by anguish, and pain, and distress, and spiritual martyrdoms, than by continual peace ?' So the Mystics teach ; so it is written in their books ; but not in the oracles of God. The Scripture nowhere says that the absence of God best perfects His work in the heart ! Rather, His presence, and a clear communion with the Father and the Son : a strong consciousness of this will do more in an hour, than His absence in an age. Joy in the Holy Ghost will far more effectually purify the soul, than the want of that joy ; and the peace of God is the best means of refining the soul from the dross of earthly affections. Away then with the idle conceit, that the kingdom of God is divided against

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trial does not imply burning alive, but merely testing by trial or persecution.

12. William Law, in *Spirit of Prayer*, Pt. II, p. 175, says : 'This coldness is the Divine offspring, or genuine birth, of the former fervour ; it comes from it as a good fruit, and brings the soul nearer to God than the fervour did. This coldness overcomes, and delivers us from,

spiritual self. Fervour is good and ought to be loved ; but tribulation, distress, and coldness, are better, because they give means and power of exercising an higher faith, a purer love, and more perfect resignation to God, which are the best state of the soul.' But Law is not referring to darkness caused by sin, but to what Wesley calls heaviness.

itself ; that the peace of God, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are obstructive of righteousness ; and that we are saved, not by faith, but by unbelief ; not by hope, but by despair !

13. So long as men dream thus, they may well ' walk in darkness ' : nor can the effect cease, till the cause is removed. But yet we must not imagine it will immediately cease, even when the cause is no more. When either ignorance or sin has caused darkness, one or the other may be removed, and yet the light which was obstructed thereby may not immediately return. As it is the free gift of God, He may restore it, sooner or later, as it pleases Him. In the case of sin, we cannot reasonably expect that it should immediately return. The sin began before the punishment, which may, therefore, justly remain after the sin is at an end. And even in the natural course of things, though a wound cannot be healed while the dart is sticking in the flesh ; yet neither is it healed as soon as that is drawn out, but soreness and pain may remain long after.

14. Lastly. If darkness be occasioned by manifold and heavy and unexpected temptations, the best way of removing and preventing this is, to teach believers always to expect temptation, seeing they dwell in an evil world, among wicked, subtle, malicious spirits, and have an heart capable of all evil. Convince them that the whole work of sanctification is not, as they imagined, wrought at once ; that when they first believe they are but as new-born babes, who are gradually to grow up, and may expect many storms before they come to the full stature of Christ. Above all, let them be instructed, when the storm is upon them, not to reason with the devil, but to pray, to pour out their souls before God, and show Him of their trouble. And these are the persons unto whom, chiefly, we are to apply the great and precious promises, not to the ignorant, till the ignorance is removed, much less to the impenitent sinner. To these we may largely and affectionately declare the loving-kindness of God our Saviour, and expatiate upon His tender mercies which have been ever of old. Here we may dwell upon the faithfulness of God, whose ' word is tried to the uttermost ' ; and upon the virtue of

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that blood which was shed for us, to 'cleanse us from all sin': and God will then bear witness to His word, and bring their souls out of trouble. He will say, 'Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.' Yea, and that light, if thou walk humbly and closely with God, will 'shine more and more unto the perfect day.'

## SERMON XLI

### HEAVINESS THROUGH MANIFOLD TEMPTATIONS

JUDGING by the Sermon Register, this sermon was first preached at Epworth on June 9, 1755 ; it was repeated on August 2 at West Street. It occurs twice in 1756, and three times in 1757. It was evidently written after the preceding sermon, and was intended to supplement its teaching. In Sermon XL Wesley had ascribed the darkness which he there speaks of entirely to sin of some kind ; but he had come to see that believers may be subject to depression without any consciousness of having brought it about by sin, and so he now distinguishes between darkness, which is always the result of sin, and heaviness, which does not presuppose any such backsliding of heart from God. The sermon was first published in Vol. IV of the Sermons in 1760.

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*Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.*—1 PET. i. 6.

I. IN the preceding discourse I have particularly spoken of that darkness of mind into which those are often observed to fall who once walked in the light of God's countenance. Nearly related to this is the heaviness of soul which is still more common, even among believers. Indeed, almost all the children of God experience this, in an higher or lower degree. And so great is the resemblance between one and the other, that they are frequently confounded together ; and we are apt to say, indifferently, ' Such an one is in darkness,' or, ' Such an one is in heaviness ' ; as if they were equivalent terms, one of which implied no more than the other. But they are far, very far, from it. Darkness is one thing ; heaviness is another. There is a difference, yea, a wide and essential difference, between the former and the latter. And such a difference it is, as all the children of God are deeply

concerned to understand: otherwise, nothing will be more easy than for them to slide out of heaviness into darkness. In order to prevent this, I will endeavour to show,—

- I. WHAT MANNER OF PERSONS THOSE WERE TO WHOM THE APOSTLE SAYS, 'YE ARE IN HEAVINESS':
- II. WHAT KIND OF HEAVINESS THEY WERE IN:
- III. WHAT WERE THE CAUSES: AND,
- IV. WHAT WERE THE ENDS OF IT. I SHALL CONCLUDE WITH SOME INFERENCES.

I. 1. I am, in the first place, to show what manner of persons those were to whom the Apostle says, 'Ye are in heaviness.' And, first, it is beyond all dispute, that they were believers at the time the Apostle thus addressed them: for so he expressly says (verse 5), 'Ye who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.' Again (verse 7), he mentions 'the trial of their faith, much more precious than that of gold which perisheth.' And yet again (verse 9), he speaks of their 'receiving the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.' At the same time, therefore, that they were 'in heaviness,' they were possessed of living faith. Their heaviness did not destroy their faith: they still 'endured, as seeing Him that is invisible.'

2. Neither did their heaviness destroy their peace; the 'peace which passeth all understanding'; which is inseparable from true, living faith. This we may easily gather from the second verse, wherein the Apostle prays, not that grace and *peace* may be *given* them, but only that it may 'be *multiplied* unto' them; that the blessing which they already enjoyed might be more abundantly bestowed upon them.

3. The persons to whom the Apostle here speaks were also full of a living hope. For thus he speaks (verse 3), 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again'—me and you, all of us who are 'sanctified by the Spirit,' and enjoy the 'sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ'—'unto a living hope, unto an inheritance,' that is, unto a living hope of an

inheritance, 'incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' So that, notwithstanding their heaviness, they still retained an hope full of immortality.

4. And they still 'rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.' They were filled with joy in the Holy Ghost. So (verse 8), the Apostle having just mentioned the final 'revelation of Jesus Christ' (namely, when He cometh to judge the world), immediately adds, 'In whom, though now ye see Him not,' not with your bodily eyes, 'yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.' Their heaviness, therefore, was not only consistent with living hope, but also with joy unspeakable: at the same time they were thus heavy, they nevertheless rejoiced with joy full of glory.

5. In the midst of their heaviness they likewise still enjoyed the love of God, which had been shed abroad in their hearts; 'whom,' says the Apostle, 'having not seen, ye love.' Though ye have not seen Him face to face; yet, knowing Him by faith, ye have obeyed His word, 'My son, give Me thy heart.' He is your God, and your love, the desire of your eyes, and your 'exceeding great reward.' Ye have sought and found happiness in Him: ye 'delight in the Lord,' and He hath given you your 'hearts' desire.'

6. Once more: though they were heavy, yet were they holy; they retained the same power over sin. They were still 'kept' from this, 'by the power of God'; they were 'obedient children, not fashioned according to their former desires'; but 'as He that had called them is holy,' so were they 'holy in all manner of conversation.' Knowing they were 'redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without spot, and without blemish,' they had, through the faith and hope, which they had in God, 'purified their souls by the Spirit.' So that, upon the whole, their heaviness well consisted with faith, with hope, with love of God and man, with the peace of God, with joy in the Holy Ghost, with inward and outward holiness. It did no way impair, much less destroy, any part of the work of God in their hearts. It did not at all interfere with that 'sanctification of the Spirit' which is the root of all true obedience; neither with

the happiness which must needs result from grace and peace reigning in the heart.

II. 1. Hence we may easily learn what kind of heaviness they were in,—the second thing which I shall endeavour to show. The word, in the original, is *λυπηθέντες*—*made sorry, grieved*: from *λύπη*—*grief, or sorrow*. This is the constant, literal meaning of the word: and, this being observed, there is no ambiguity in the expression, nor any difficulty in understanding it. The persons spoken of here were *grieved*: the heaviness they were in was neither more nor less than *sorrow, or grief*,—a passion which every child of man is well acquainted with.

2. It is probable our translators rendered it *heaviness* (though a less common word), to denote two things: first, the degree, and next, the continuance, of it. It does indeed seem, that it is not a slight or inconsiderable degree of grief which is here spoken of; but such as makes a strong impression upon, and sinks deep into, the soul. Neither does this appear to be a transient sorrow, such as passes away in an hour; but rather, such as, having taken fast hold of the heart, is not presently shaken off, but continues for some time, as a settled temper, rather than a passion, even in them that have a living faith in Christ, and the genuine love of God in their hearts.

3. Even in these, this heaviness may sometimes be so deep, as to overshadow the whole soul; to give a colour, as it were, to all the affections; such as will appear in the whole behaviour. It may likewise have an influence over the body: particularly in those that are either of a naturally weak constitution, or weakened by some accidental disorder, especially of the nervous kind. In many cases, we find 'the corruptible body presses down the soul': in this, the

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II. par. 1. The R.V. translates 'Ye have been put to grief in manifold trials.'

2. The A.V. translators took the word from the older versions. Tyndale has 'Ye are in hevines':

Cranmer 'Ye are in hevynes'; the Geneva version 'Ye are in heavines.' The word is used in the sense of sorrow from the earliest times.

3. 'The corruptible body,' &c., quoted from Wisdom ix. 15. Wesley

soul rather presses down the body, and weakens it more and more. Nay, I will not say that deep and lasting sorrow of heart may not sometimes weaken a strong constitution, and lay the foundation of such bodily disorders as are not easily removed: and yet, all this may consist with a measure of that faith which still worketh by love.

4. This may well be termed a 'fiery trial'; and though it is not the same with that the Apostle speaks of in the fourth chapter, yet many of the expressions there used concerning outward sufferings may be accommodated to this inward affliction. They cannot, indeed, with any propriety, be applied to them that are in darkness. These do not, cannot rejoice; neither is it true, that 'the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon' them. But He frequently doth on those that are in heaviness; so that, though sorrowful, yet are they always rejoicing.

III. 1. But to proceed to the third point: what are the causes of such sorrow or heaviness in a true believer? The Apostle tells us clearly: 'Ye are in heaviness,' says he, 'through manifold temptations'; *ποικίλοις*—*manifold*, not only many in number, but of many kinds. They may be varied and diversified a thousand ways, by the change or addition of numberless circumstances. And this very diversity and variety make it more difficult to guard against them. Among these we may rank all bodily disorders; particularly acute diseases, and violent pain of every kind, whether affecting the whole body, or the smallest part of it. It is true, some who have enjoyed uninterrupted health, and have felt none of these, may make light of them, and wonder that sickness, or pain of body, should bring heaviness upon the

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got so near the true explanation of the matter here that it is surprising that he should have missed it. The real explanation of the periods of depression which so often follow exalted religious experiences is the natural exhaustion of the nervous system after extreme excitement,

and the consequent reaction into gloom and melancholy. See introduction to previous sermon.

4. This passage does certainly refer to 'heaviness,' not to 'darkness.' See Sermon XL, iii. 11, and iv. 1 below.

III. 1. These causes now to be

mind. And perhaps one in a thousand is of so peculiar a constitution as not to feel pain like other men. So hath it pleased God to show His almighty power, by producing some of these prodigies of nature, who have seemed not to regard pain at all, though of the severest kind ; if that contempt of pain was not owing partly to the force of education, partly to a preternatural cause—to the power either of good or evil spirits, who raised those men above the state of mere nature. But, abstracting from these particular cases, it is, in general, a just observation, that

Pain is perfect misery, and extreme  
Quite overturns all patience.

And even where this is prevented by the grace of God, where men do ‘ possess their souls in patience,’ it may, nevertheless, occasion much inward heaviness : the soul sympathizing with the body.

2. All diseases of long continuance, though less painful, are apt to produce the same effect. When God appoints over us consumption, or the chilling and burning ague, if it be not speedily removed, it will not only ‘ consume the eyes,’ but ‘ cause sorrow of heart.’ This is eminently the case with regard to all those which are termed *nervous disorders*. And faith does not overturn the course of nature—natural causes still produce natural effects. Faith no more hinders the *sinking of the spirits* (as it is called) in an hysteric illness, than the rising of the pulse in a fever.

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enumerated may be contributory to ‘ heaviness ’ ; but the chief cause is that stated above, ii. 3.

The quotation is from Milton, *Paradise Lost*, vi. 462, but as inaccurate as many of Wesley’s quotations are. The original runs :

But pain is perfect misery, the worst  
Of evils, and excessive, overturns  
All patience.

2. ‘ The sinking of the spirits.’  
The phrase is derived from the old

notion that there are three subtle fluids circulating in the body, the animal, the vital, and the natural spirits, taking their origin in the brain, the heart, and the liver respectively. We still speak of a man being in spirits, or out of spirits. The Christian Scientists could have told Wesley that faith has an astonishing effect on hysteric illnesses ; indeed our modern physicians are beginning to recognize this, and use faith as a curative agent.

3. Again : when 'calamity cometh as a whirlwind, and poverty as an armed man' ; is this a little temptation ? Is it strange if it occasion sorrow and heaviness ? Although this also may appear but a small thing to those that stand at a distance, or who look, and 'pass by on the other side' ; yet it is otherwise to them that feel it. 'Having food and raiment' (indeed the latter word, *σκεπάσματα*, implies *lodging* as well as *apparel*), we may, if the love of God is in our hearts, 'be therewith content.' But what shall they do who have none of these ? who, as it were, 'embrace the rock for a shelter' ? who have only the earth to lie upon, and only the sky to cover them ? who have not a dry, or warm, much less a clean, abode for themselves and their little ones ? no, nor clothing to keep themselves, or those they love next themselves, from pinching cold, either by day or night ? I laugh at the stupid Heathen crying out,

*Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in se,  
Quàm quod ridiculos homines facit !*

Has poverty nothing worse in it than this, that it *makes men liable to be laughed at* ? It is a sign this idle poet talked by rote of the things which he knew not. Is not want of food something worse than this ? God pronounced it as a curse upon man, that he should earn it 'by the sweat of his brow.' But how many are there in this Christian country, that toil, and labour, and sweat, and have it not at last, but struggle with weariness and hunger together ? Is it not worse for one, after a hard day's labour, to come back to a poor, cold, dirty, uncomfortable lodging, and to find there not even the food which is needful to repair his wasted strength ? You that live at ease in the earth, that want nothing but eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand how well God hath dealt with you, is it not worse to seek bread day by day, and find none ? perhaps to find the comfort also of five or six children crying for what he has not to give ! Were it not that

3. The Greek word quoted may include both clothes and shelter ; but most often it means clothes only.

The 'stupid heathen' is Juvenal ; the lines are from *Sat.* iii. 152.

he is restrained by an unseen hand, would he not soon 'curse God and die'? O want of bread! want of bread! Who can tell what this means, unless he hath felt it himself? I am astonished it occasions no more than heaviness even in them that believe.

4. Perhaps, next to this, we may place the death of those who were near and dear unto us, of a tender parent, and one not much declined into the vale of years; of a beloved child, just rising into life, and clasping about our heart, of a friend that was as our own soul—next the grace of God, the last, best gift of Heaven. And a thousand circumstances may enhance the distress. Perhaps the child, the friend, died in our embrace!—perhaps, was snatched away when we looked not for it! flourishing, cut down like a flower. In all these cases, we not only may, but ought to, be affected: it is the design of God that we should. He would not have us stocks and stones. He would have our affections regulated, not extinguished. Therefore, 'nature unproved may drop a tear.' There may be sorrow without sin.

5. A still deeper sorrow we may feel for those who are dead while they live; on account of the unkindness, ingratitude, apostasy, of those who were united to us in the closest ties. Who can express what a lover of souls may feel for a friend, a brother, dead to God? for an husband, a wife, a parent, a child rushing into sin, as an horse into the battle; and, in spite of all arguments and persuasions, hasting to work out his own damnation. And this anguish of spirit may be heightened to an inconceivable degree, by the consideration, that he who is now posting to destruction once ran well in the way of life. Whatever he was in time past

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4. 'Not much declined,' &c.: a reminiscence of Shakespeare, *Othello*, iii. 3. 265:

I am declined  
Into the vale of years,—yet that's not much.

'Nature unproved,' &c.: line 3 of Samuel Wesley, jun.'s, poem, 'The Parish Priest.'

5. We have had 'the horse rushing

into the battle' before; the phrase used to be common in our prayer-meetings, often associated with 'the greedy ox lapping up water.' I fancy most folk think it is in the Bible; but the nearest thing to it is the description of the war-horse in Job xxxix. 19 ss.

serves now to no other purpose than to make our reflections on what he is more piercing and afflictive.

6. In all these circumstances, we may be assured, our great adversary will not be wanting to improve his opportunity. He, who is always 'walking about, seeking whom he may devour,' will then, especially, use all his power, all his skill, if haply he may gain any advantage over the soul that is already cast down. He will not be sparing of his fiery darts, such as are most likely to find an entrance, and to fix most deeply in the heart, by their suitableness to the temptation that assaults it. He will labour to inject unbelieving, or blasphemous, or repining thoughts. He will suggest that God does not regard, does not govern, the earth ; or, at least, that He does not govern it aright, not by the rules of justice and mercy. He will endeavour to stir up the heart against God, to renew our natural enmity against Him. And if we attempt to fight him with his own weapons, if we begin to reason with him, more and more heaviness will undoubtedly ensue, if not utter darkness.

7. It has been frequently supposed, that there is another cause, if not of darkness, at least, of heaviness ; namely, God's withdrawing Himself from the soul, because it is His sovereign will. Certainly He will do this, if we grieve His Holy Spirit, either by outward or inward sin ; either by doing evil, or neglecting to do good ; by giving way either to pride or anger, to spiritual sloth, to foolish desire, or inordinate affection. But that He ever withdraws Himself *because He will*, merely because it is His good pleasure, I absolutely deny. There is no text in all the Bible which gives any colour for such a supposition. Nay, it is a supposition, contrary, not only to many particular texts, but to the whole tenor of Scripture. It is repugnant to the very nature of

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7. Thus Juliana of Norwich in her *Revelations* (1373) says : ' For profit of a man's soul he is sometimes left to himself ; although sin is not always the cause ; for, in that time I sinned not wherefore I should be so left to

myself ; for it was so sudden.' The Mystics believed that God deliberately withdrew Himself at times from their souls, so that they might learn to trust Him in the darkness and to feel their own helplessness

God: it is utterly beneath His majesty and wisdom (as an eminent writer strongly expresses it), 'to play at bo-peep with His creatures.' It is inconsistent both with His justice and mercy, and with the sound experience of all His children.

8. One more cause of heaviness is mentioned by many of those who are termed 'mystic authors.' And the notion has crept in, I know not how, even among plain people who have no acquaintance with them. I cannot better explain this, than in the words of a late writer, who relates this as her own experience: 'I continued so happy in my Beloved, that, although I should have been forced to live a vagabond in a desert, I should have found no difficulty in it. This state had not lasted long, when, in effect, I found myself led into a desert. I found myself in a forlorn condition, altogether poor, wretched, and miserable. The proper source of this grief is, the knowledge of ourselves, by which we find that there is an extreme unlikeness between God and us. We see ourselves most opposite to Him; and that our inmost soul is entirely corrupted, depraved, and full of all kind of

without Him. Wesley's strong common sense could not accept this.

'An eminent writer': see S. Badcock, *Remarks on Dr. Kenrick's Observations on Soame Jenyn's View*—'Who but a madman can believe that reason and religion are thus meant to play at bo-peep with each other?'

8. St. Juan of the Cross makes the night of faith the second stage in spiritual progress. In the night of faith, he says, 'all is darkness.' Faith is midnight; it is the deepest darkness that we have to pass. Through some such experience most of the famous Mystics passed; and, as Dr. Inge says (*Christian Mysticism*, p. 244): 'Introspective Mysticism' (at the end of the mediaeval ages) 'had done its work—a work of great service to the human race. It had explored all the recesses of the lonely heart, and had wrestled with the angel of God through the terrors

of the spiritual night even till the morning.' Madame Guyon says: 'About this time I fell into a state of total darkness which continued near seven years'; on which Wesley remarks in a note in his edition of her *Life* (1776), 'This was certainly in part a bodily disorder, and partly owing to ignorance and diabolical temptation. But it is grievous ignorance to suppose that this is God's constant method of dealing with His children.' In the preface to her *Life* he speaks of 'that capital mistake which runs through all her writings, that God never does, never can purify a soul, but by inward or outward suffering. Utterly false'! The passage is exactly on the lines of much in Madame Guyon's *Life*, and in 1742 Wesley read her *Short Method of Prayer* and *Les Torrents Spirituels*. The quotation may be from one of these.

evil and malignity, of the world and the flesh, and all sorts of abominations.'—From hence it has been inferred, that the knowledge of ourselves, without which we should perish everlastingly, must, even after we have attained justifying faith, occasion the deepest heaviness.

9. But upon this I would observe, (1) In the preceding paragraph, this writer says, 'Hearing I had not a true faith in Christ, I offered myself up to God, and immediately felt His love.' It may be so; and yet it does not appear that this was justification. It is more probable, it was no more than what are usually termed, the 'drawings of the Father.' And if so, the heaviness and darkness which followed was no other than conviction of sin, which, in the nature of things, must precede that faith whereby we are justified. (2) Suppose she was justified almost the same moment she was convinced of wanting faith, there was then no time for that gradually-increasing self-knowledge which uses to precede justification; in this case, therefore, it came after, and was probably the more severe, the less it was expected. (3) It is allowed there will be a far deeper, a far clearer and fuller knowledge of our inbred sin, of our total corruption by nature, after justification, than ever there was before it. But this need not occasion darkness of soul: I will not say, that it *must* bring us into heaviness. Were it so, the Apostle would not have used that expression, *if need be*; for there would be an absolute, indispensable need of it, for all that would know themselves; that is, in effect, for all that would know the perfect love of God, and be thereby 'made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.' But this is by no means the case. On the contrary, God may increase the knowledge of ourselves to any degree, and increase, in the same proportion, the knowledge of Himself, and the experience of His love. And in this case there would be no 'desert,' no 'misery,' no 'forlorn condition'; but love, and peace, and joy, gradually springing up into everlasting life.

IV 1. For what ends, then (which was the fourth thing to be considered), does God permit heaviness to befall so

many of His children? The Apostle gives us a plain and direct answer to this important question 'that the trial of their faith, which is much more precious than gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ' (verse 7). There may be an allusion to this, in that well-known passage of the fourth chapter (although it primarily relates to quite another thing, as has been already observed): 'Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you: but rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, that, when His glory shall be revealed, ye may likewise rejoice with exceeding great joy' (verse 12, &c.).

2. Hence we learn, that the first and great end of God's permitting the temptations which bring heaviness on His children, is the trial of their faith, which is tried by these, even as gold by the fire. Now we know, gold tried in the fire is purified thereby, is separated from its dross. And so is faith in the fire of temptation, the more it is tried, the more it is purified; yea, and not only purified, but also strengthened, confirmed, increased abundantly, by so many more proofs of the wisdom and power, the love and faithfulness of God. This, then—to increase our faith—is one gracious end of God's permitting those manifold temptations.

3. They serve to try, to purify, to confirm, and increase that living hope also, whereunto 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again of His abundant mercy.' Indeed our hope cannot but increase in the same proportion with our faith. On this foundation it stands: believing in His name, living by faith in the Son of God, we hope for, we have a confident expectation of, the glory which shall be revealed; and, consequently, whatever strengthens our faith, increases our hope also. At the same time it increases our joy in the Lord, which cannot but attend an hope full of immortality. In this view the Apostle exhorts believers in the other chapter: 'Rejoice that ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ.' On this very account, 'happy are you;

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IV. 1. On the passage from 1 Peter iv. 12 see note on Sermon XL, iii. 11.

for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you': and hereby ye are enabled, even in the midst of sufferings, to 'rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

4. They rejoice the more, because the trials which increase their faith and hope increase their love also, both their gratitude to God for all His mercies, and their good-will to all mankind. Accordingly, the more deeply sensible they are of the loving-kindness of God their Saviour, the more is their heart inflamed with love to Him who 'first loved us.' The clearer and stronger evidence they have of the glory that shall be revealed, the more do they love Him who hath purchased it for them, and 'given them the earnest' thereof 'in their hearts.' And this, the increase of their love, is another end of the temptations permitted to come upon them.

5. Yet another is, their advance in holiness; holiness of heart, and holiness of conversation,—the latter naturally resulting from the former, for a good tree will bring forth good fruit. And all inward holiness is the immediate fruit of the faith that worketh by love. By this the blessed Spirit purifies the heart from pride, self-will, passion; from love of the world, from foolish and hurtful desires, from vile and vain affections. Beside that, sanctified afflictions have, through the grace of God, an immediate and direct tendency to holiness. Through the operation of His Spirit, they humble, more and more, and abase the soul before God. They calm and meeken our turbulent spirit, tame the fierceness of our nature, soften our obstinacy and self-will, crucify us to the world, and bring us to expect all our strength from, and to seek all our happiness in, God.

6. And all these terminate in that great end, that our faith, hope, love, and holiness 'may be found,' if it doth not yet appear, 'unto praise' from God Himself, 'and honour' from men and angels, 'and glory,' assigned by the great Judge to all that have endured unto the end. And this will be assigned in that awful day to every man, 'according to his works'; according to the work which God had wrought in his heart, and the outward works which he has wrought for God, and likewise according to what he had suffered: so that all these

trials are unspeakable gain. So many ways do these 'light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory' !

7. Add to this the advantage which others may receive by seeing our behaviour under affliction. We find by experience, example frequently makes a deeper impression upon us than precept. And what examples have a stronger influence, not only on those who are partakers of like precious faith, but even on them who have not known God, than that of a soul calm and serene in the midst of storms, sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; meekly accepting whatever is the will of God, however grievous it may be to nature; saying, in sickness and pain, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'—in loss or want, 'The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!'

V. 1. I am to conclude with some inferences. And, first, how wide is the difference between darkness of soul, and heaviness, which, nevertheless, are so generally confounded with each other, even by experienced Christians! Darkness, or the wilderness state, implies a total loss of joy in the Holy Ghost: heaviness does not; in the midst of this we may 'rejoice with joy unspeakable.' They that are in darkness have lost the peace of God: they that are in heaviness have not, so far from it, that at the very time 'peace,' as well as 'grace,' may 'be multiplied' unto them. In the former, the love of God is waxed cold, if it be not utterly extinguished; in the latter, it retains its full force, or, rather, increases daily. In these, faith itself, if not totally lost, is, however, grievously decayed: their evidence and conviction of things not seen, particularly of the pardoning love of God, is not so clear or strong as in time past; and their trust in Him is propor-

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V. 1. So in a letter to Miss Bishop, written June 17, 1774, Wesley says: 'The difference between heaviness and darkness of soul (the wilderness state) should never be forgotten. Darkness, unless in the case of bodily disorder, seldom comes upon

us but by our own fault. It is not so with respect to heaviness, which may be occasioned by a thousand circumstances, such as neither our wisdom can foresee nor our power prevent.'

tionably weakened : those, though they see Him not, yet have a clear, unshaken confidence in God, and an abiding evidence of that love whereby all their sins are blotted out. So that as long as we can distinguish faith from unbelief, hope from despair, peace from war, the love of God from the love of the world, we may infallibly distinguish heaviness from darkness !

2. We may learn from hence, secondly, that there may be need of heaviness, but there can be no need of darkness. There may be need of our being in ' heaviness for a season,' in order to the ends above recited , at least, in this sense, as it is a natural result of those ' manifold temptations,' which are needful to try and increase our faith, to confirm and enlarge our hope, to purify our heart from all unholy tempers, and to perfect us in love. And, by consequence, they are needful in order to brighten our crown, and add to our eternal weight of glory. But we cannot say, that darkness is needful in order to any of these ends. It is no way conducive to them : the loss of faith, hope, love, is surely neither conducive to holiness, nor to the increase of that reward in heaven which will be in proportion to our holiness on earth.

3. From the Apostle's manner of speaking we may gather, thirdly, that even heaviness is not *always* needful. ' Now, for a season, if need be ' : so it is not needful for *all persons* ; nor for any person at *all times*. God is able, He has both power and wisdom, to work, when He pleases, the same work of grace in any soul by other means. And in some instances He does so , He causes those whom it pleaseth Him to go on from strength to strength, even till they ' perfect holiness in His fear,' with scarce any heaviness at all ; as having an absolute power over the heart of man, and moving all the springs of it at His pleasure. But these cases are rare : God generally sees good to try ' acceptable men in the furnace of affliction.' So that manifold temptations, and heaviness, more or less, are usually the portion of His dearest children.

4. We ought, therefore, lastly, to watch and pray, and use our utmost endeavours to avoid falling into darkness. But we need not be solicitous how to avoid, so much as how to

improve by, heaviness. Our great care should be, so to behave ourselves under it, so to wait upon the Lord therein, that it may fully answer all the design of His love, in permitting it to come upon us ; that it may be a means of increasing our faith, of confirming our hope, of perfecting us in all holiness. Whenever it comes, let us have an eye to those gracious ends for which it is permitted, and use all diligence that we may not make void the counsel of God against ourselves. Let us earnestly work together with Him, by the grace which He is continually giving us, in 'purifying ourselves from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit,' and daily growing in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, till we are received into His everlasting kingdom !

## SERMON XLII

### SELF-DENIAL

IN *Journal*, February 20, 1738, Wesley writes: 'I returned to London. On Tuesday (the 21st) I preached at Great St. Helen's on "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."' He preached again at St. Helen's on April 23 and May 9. On Sunday, January 17, 1790, he records: 'In the afternoon I preached in Great St. Helen's to a large congregation. It is, I believe, fifty years since I preached there before. What has God wrought since that time!' This venerable church, with its curious double nave, stands on the east side of Bishopsgate Street Within, in Great St. Helen's Place. It was founded in 1212, and was one of the few London churches that escaped the Great Fire. Sir John Crosby, the builder of Crosby House, and Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange, are buried there. The name of William Shakespeare stands nineteenth in a list of the inhabitants of the parish of St. Helen's as the owner of property of the value of £5, probably the furniture of his lodging.

The sermon was thus first written in Wesley's pre-conversion period, probably at Savannah; but the references in I. 1 to the 'smooth Moravian' and in iii. 2 to the Latin conversation with Count Zinzendorf in 1741 indicate that it was revised after that time, and most likely after the final breach with the Moravians in 1745. In the *Journal* for August 16, 1744, he gives in full a letter on self-denial which he had just received, probably from the Rev. Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley; and on February 17, 1745, another from W. B. (possibly William Briggs, one of his first Book Stewards) on the same subject. He was therefore thinking seriously about this question in 1744-5, and I should be inclined to date the revision of the sermon at this time, especially as it does not occur at all in the Sermon Register 1747-61. His view of its importance remained the same to the end; in March 1790 he attributes the want of increase in the Society at Bristol 'to nothing but want of self-denial.'

The exegesis of the text is on conventional lines, and its primary meaning is ignored. As the context shows, our Lord had just predicted His own death; and what He means is that every one who

desires to be His disciple must renounce himself, and be prepared to die on the cross with Him, if necessary. The criminal to be executed was compelled to carry the cross, or at least the cross-beam of it, to the place where he was to suffer ; hence ' to take up the cross daily ' means to be ready any day for a shameful death for Christ's sake. The phrase has been whittled down till it is used for the smallest instances of self-denial, and it may be said that the less is included in the greater ; but we ought not to forget the full force of it, as our Lord here uses it. The word ' self-denial ' has been similarly weakened ; a man will say that he has denied himself when he has merely given up smoking ! To deny oneself is to renounce reputation and life for Christ's sake—nothing less.

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*And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.—LUKE ix. 23.*

1. IT has been frequently imagined, that the direction here given related chiefly, if not wholly, to the Apostles ; at least, to the Christians of the first ages, or those in a state of persecution. But this is a grievous mistake : for although our blessed Lord is here directing His discourse more immediately to His Apostles, and those other disciples who attended Him in the days of His flesh : yet, in them He speaks to us, and to all mankind, without any exception or limitation. The very reason of the thing puts it beyond dispute, that the duty which is here enjoined is not peculiar to them, or to the Christians of the early ages. It no more regards any particular order of men, or particular time, than any particular country. No. it is of the most universal nature, respecting all times, and all persons, yea, and all things ; not meats and drinks only, and things pertaining to the senses. The meaning is, ' If any man,' of whatever rank, station, circumstances, in any nation, in any age of the world, ' will ' effectually ' come after Me, let him deny himself ' in all things ; let him ' take up his cross,' of whatever kind ; yea, and that ' daily ; and follow Me.'

2. The *denying* ourselves, and the *taking up our cross*, in the full extent of the expression, is not a thing of small concern : it is not expedient only, as are some of the circumstances of religion ; but it is absolutely, indispensably neces-

sary, either to our becoming or continuing His disciples. It is absolutely necessary, in the very nature of the thing, to our coming after Him, and following Him ; insomuch that, as far as we do not practise it, we are not His disciples. If we do not continually deny ourselves, we do not learn of Him, but of other masters. If we do not take up our cross daily, we do not come after Him, but after the world, or the prince of the world, or our own fleshly mind. If we are not walking in the way of the cross, we are not following Him ; we are not treading in His steps ; but going back from, or at least wide of, Him.

3. It is for this reason, that so many ministers of Christ, in almost every age and nation, particularly since the Reformation of the Church from the innovations and corruptions gradually crept into it, have wrote and spoke so largely on this important duty, both in their public discourses and private exhortations. This induced them to disperse abroad many tracts upon the subject ; and some in our own nation. They knew, both from the oracles of God and from the testimony of their own experience, how impossible it was not to deny our Master, unless we will deny ourselves ; and how vainly we attempt to follow Him that was crucified, unless we take up our own cross daily.

4. But may not this very consideration make it reasonable to inquire, If so much has been said and wrote on the subject already, what need is there to say or write any more ? I answer, there are no inconsiderable numbers, even of people fearing God, who have not had the opportunity either of hearing what has been spoke, or reading what has been wrote, upon it. And, perhaps, if they had read much of what has been written, they would not have been much profited. Many who have wrote (some of them large volumes), do by no

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3. In his criticism of existing treatises on self-denial, it is clear that Wesley has in mind amongst others the writings of the Mystics. But it is hard to see how his criticisms apply to such works as Richard

Baxter's *Treatise on Self-Denial*, or Penn's *No Cross, No Crown*, or Thomas à Kempis's *De Imitatione Christi*, or Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*, or Law's *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection*.

means appear to have understood the subject. Either they had imperfect views of the very nature of it (and then they could never explain it to others), or they were unacquainted with the due extent of it; they did not see how exceeding broad this command is, or they were not sensible of the absolute, the indispensable necessity of it. Others speak of it in so dark, so perplexed, so intricate, so mystical a manner, as if they designed rather to conceal it from the vulgar, than to explain it to common readers. Others speak admirably well, with great clearness and strength, on the necessity of self-denial; but then they deal in generals only, without coming to particular instances, and so are of little use to the bulk of mankind, to men of ordinary capacity and education. And if some of them do descend to particulars, it is to those particulars only which do not affect the generality of men, since they seldom, if ever, occur in common life; such as the enduring imprisonment, or tortures—the giving up, in a literal sense, their houses or lands, their husbands or wives, children, or life itself; to none of which we are called, nor are likely to be, unless God should permit times of public persecution to return. In the meantime, I know of no writer in the English tongue who has described the nature of self-denial in plain and intelligible terms, such as lie level with common understandings, and applied it to those little particulars which daily occur in common life. A discourse of this kind is wanted still; and it is wanted the more, because in every stage of the spiritual life, although there is a variety of particular hindrances of our attaining grace or growing therein, yet are all resolvable into these general ones,—either we do not deny ourselves, or we do not take up our cross.

In order to supply this defect in some degree, I shall endeavour to show, first, what it is for a man to deny himself, and what to take up his cross; and, secondly, that if a man be not fully Christ's disciple, it is always owing to the want of this.

I. 1. I shall, first, endeavour to show, what it is for a man to 'deny himself, and take up his cross daily.' This

is a point which is, of all others, most necessary to be considered and thoroughly understood, even on this account, that it is, of all others, most opposed by numerous and powerful enemies. All our nature must certainly rise up against this, even in its own defence ; the world, consequently, the men who take nature, not grace, for their guide, abhor the very sound of it. And the great enemy of our souls, well knowing its importance, cannot but move every stone against it. But this is not all : even those who have in some measure shaken off the yoke of the devil, who have experienced, especially of late years, a real work of grace in their hearts, yet are no friends to this grand doctrine of Christianity, though it is so peculiarly insisted on by their Master. Some of them are as deeply and totally ignorant concerning it, as if there was not one word about it in the Bible. Others are farther off still, having unawares imbibed strong prejudices against it. These they have received partly from outside Christians, men of a fair speech and behaviour, who want nothing of godliness but the power, nothing of religion but the spirit ; and partly from those who did once, if they do not now, ‘ taste of the powers of the world to come.’ But are there any of these who do not both practise self-denial themselves, and recommend it to others ? You are little acquainted with mankind, if you doubt of this. There are whole bodies of men who only do not declare war against it. To go no farther than London : look upon the whole body of Predestinarians, who by the free mercy of God have lately been called out of the darkness of nature into the light of faith. Are they patterns of self-denial ? How few of them even profess to practise it at all ! How few of them recommend it them-

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I. 1. ‘The Predestinarians.’ Whitefield came back from America in 1741 a confirmed Calvinist, and at once entered into a controversy with Wesley on the ground of his sermon on Free Grace (No. CXXVIII). He was followed by John Cennick, Joseph Humphreys, and Howell Harris, and many mem-

bers of the Methodist Societies in London and Bristol and elsewhere. Wesley’s objection to Predestinarianism was partly that the doctrine of Reprobation represented God as a monster of injustice, and partly that it led most obviously to Antinomianism ; for if the elect must be saved, do what they will, it is clear

selves, or are pleased with them that do ! Rather, do they not continually represent it in the most odious colours, as if it were seeking 'salvation by works,' or seeking 'to establish our own righteousness' ? And how readily do Antinomians of all kinds, from the smooth Moravian, to the boisterous, foul-mouthed Ranter, join the cry, with their silly, unmeaning cant of *legality*, and *preaching the law* ! Therefore you are in constant danger of being wheedled, hectored, or ridiculed out of this important gospel doctrine, either by false teachers, or false brethren (more or less beguiled from the simplicity of the gospel), if you are not deeply grounded therein. Let fervent prayer, then, go before, accompany, and follow what you are now about to read, that it may be written in your heart by the finger of God, so as never to be erased.

2. But what is self-denial ? Wherein are we to deny ourselves ? And whence does the necessity of this arise ? I answer, the will of God is the supreme, unalterable rule for every intelligent creature ; equally binding every angel in heaven, and every man upon earth. Nor can it be otherwise this is the natural, necessary result of the relation between creatures and their Creator. But if the will of God be our one rule of action in everything, great and small, it follows, by undeniable consequence, that we are not to do our own will in anything. Here, therefore, we see at once the nature,

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that good works are quite unnecessary and self-denial an absurdity.

'The smooth Moravian.' Wesley again and again accuses the Moravians of using guile and reserve in their conversation. In his letter to Zinzendorf of August 8, 1741, he says : 'With regard to Christian salvation, I have heard some of you affirm that it does imply liberty from the commandments of God ; that it does imply liberty to conform to the world ; that it does imply liberty to avoid persecution by not using plainness of speech ; nay, by a close, dark, reserved conversation and behaviour. And in many of you I

have found much subtlety, much evasion and disguise, much guile and dissimulation.'

'Ranter' was a nickname first given to a sect of Antinomians which appeared about 1644 in England. Richard Baxter says of them : 'They conjoined withal a cursed doctrine of libertinism which brought them to all abominable filthiness of life ; and so, as allowed by God, they spake most hideous words of blasphemy, and many of them committed whoredoms commonly.' They had practically been extinguished as an organized body, but their Antinomian doctrine survived.

with the ground and reason, of self-denial. We see the nature of self-denial it is the denying or refusing to follow our own will, from a conviction that the will of God is the only rule of action to us. And we see the reason thereof, because we are creatures ; because ' it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves.'

3. This reason for self-denial must hold, even with regard to the angels of God in heaven , and with regard to man, innocent and holy, as he came out of the hands of his Creator. But a farther reason for it arises from the condition wherein all men are since the fall. We are all now ' shapen in wickedness, and in sin did our mother conceive us.' Our nature is altogether corrupt in every power and faculty. And our will, depraved equally with the rest, is wholly bent to indulge our natural corruption. On the other hand, it is the will of God that we resist and counteract that corruption, not at some times or in some things only, but at all times and in all things. Here, therefore, is a farther ground for constant and universal self-denial.

4. To illustrate this a little further , the will of God is a path leading straight to God. The will of man, which once ran parallel with it, is now another path, not only different from it, but, in our present state, directly contrary to it : it leads from God. If, therefore, we walk in the one, we must necessarily quit the other. We cannot walk in both. Indeed, a man of *faint heart and feeble hands* may go *in two ways*, one after the other. But he cannot walk in two ways at the same time : he cannot, at one and the same time, follow his own will, and follow the will of God he must choose the one or the other ; denying God's will, to follow his own ; or denying himself, to follow the will of God.

5. Now, it is undoubtedly pleasing, for the time, to follow our own will, by indulging, in any instance that offers, the corruption of our nature : but by following it in anything, we so far strengthen the perverseness of our will ; and by

3. See above, introduction to Sermon XXXVIII (on Original Sin), and notes.

4. Eccclus. ii. 12 : ' Woe be to fearful hearts and faint hands, and the sinner that goeth two ways.'

indulging it, we continually increase the corruption of our nature. So, by the food which is agreeable to the palate, we often increase a bodily disease: it gratifies the taste, but it inflames the disorder; it brings pleasure, but it also brings death.

6. On the whole, then, to deny ourselves, is to deny our own will, where it does not fall in with the will of God; and that however pleasing it may be. It is, to deny ourselves any pleasure which does not spring from, and lead to, God; that is, in effect, to refuse going out of our way, though into a pleasant, flowery path; to refuse what we know to be deadly poison, though agreeable to the taste.

7. And every one that would follow Christ, that would be His real disciple, must not only deny himself, but take up his cross also. A cross is anything contrary to our will, anything displeasing to our nature. So that taking up our cross goes a little farther than denying ourselves; it rises a little higher, and is a more difficult task to flesh and blood; it being more easy to forgo pleasure, than to endure pain.

8. Now, in running 'the race that is set before us,' according to the will of God, there is often a cross lying in the way; that is, something which is not only not joyous, but grievous, something which is contrary to our will, which is displeasing to our nature. What, then, is to be done? The choice is plain: either we must take up our cross, or we must turn aside from the way of God, 'from the holy commandment delivered to us', if we do not stop altogether, or turn back to everlasting perdition!

9. In order to the healing of that corruption, that evil disease, which every man brings with him into the world, it is often needful to pluck out, as it were, a right eye, to cut off

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7. This has become the conventional meaning of a cross in devotional literature; but, as we have seen, it is not what our Lord meant in this passage. Still, it may fairly be said that to spend our whole life for Christ, whether the expenditure be made at one moment, or spread

over many years, is essentially what is intended; just as we may spend a pound in one sum, or in halfpennies at a time.

9. This paragraph, I feel sure, is a transcript of Wesley's own experience in Savannah. On March 9, 1737, after he found that Miss Sophy

a right hand,—so painful is either the thing itself which must be done, or the only means of doing it ; the parting, suppose, with a foolish desire, with an inordinate affection ; or a separation from the object of it, without which it can never be extinguished. In the former kind, the tearing away such a desire or affection, when it is deeply rooted in the soul, is often like the piercing of a sword, yea, like ‘ the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and marrow.’ The Lord then sits upon the soul as a refiner’s fire, to burn up all the dross thereof. And this is a cross indeed ; it is essentially painful ; it must be so, in the very nature of the thing. The soul cannot be thus torn asunder, it cannot pass through the fire, without pain.

10. In the latter kind, the means to heal a sin-sick soul, to cure a foolish desire, an inordinate affection, are often painful, not in the nature of the thing, but from the nature of the disease. So when our Lord said to the rich young man, ‘ Go, sell that thou hast, and give to the poor ’ (as well knowing, this was the only means of healing his covetousness), the very thought of it gave him so much pain, that ‘ he went away sorrowful ’ ; choosing rather to part with his hope of heaven, than his possessions on earth. This was a burden he could not consent to lift, a cross he would not take up. And in the one kind or the other, every follower of Christ will surely have need to ‘ take up his cross daily.’

11. The ‘ taking up ’ differs a little from ‘ bearing his cross.’ We are then properly said to ‘ bear our cross,’ when we endure what is laid upon us without our choice, with meekness and resignation. Whereas, we do not properly ‘ take up our cross,’ but when we voluntarily suffer what it is in our power to avoid ; when we willingly embrace the

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Hopkey was going to marry Mr. Williamson, he says : ‘ I came home and went into my garden. I was as stupid as if half awake, and yet in the sharpest pain I ever felt. To see her no more : that thought was as the piercings of a sword ; it was not to be borne nor shaken off. I

was weary of the world, of light, of life. . . I could not pray. Then indeed the snares of death were about me ; the pains of hell overtook me.’

10. This distinction is hardly in the text ; but it is a real one, and worth making.

will of God, though contrary to our own ; when we choose what is painful, because it is the will of our wise and gracious Creator.

12. And thus it behoves every disciple of Christ to take up, as well as to bear, his cross. Indeed, in one sense, it is not *his* alone ; it is common to him, and many others ; seeing there is no temptation befalls any man, *εἰ μὴ ἀνθρώπινος*,—‘but such as is common to men’: such as is incident and adapted to their common nature and situation in the present world. But, in another sense, as it is considered with all its circumstances, it is his ; peculiar to himself ; it is prepared of God for him ; it is given by God to him, as a token of His love. And if he receives it as such, and, after using such means to remove the pressure as Christian wisdom directs, lies as clay in the potter’s hand, it is disposed and ordered by God for his good, both with regard to the quality of it, and in respect to its quantity and degree, its duration, and every other circumstance.

13. In all this, we may easily conceive our blessed Lord to act as the Physician of our souls, not merely ‘for His own pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.’ If, in searching our wounds, He puts us to pain, it is only in order to heal them. He cuts away what is putrefied or unsound, in order to preserve the sound part. And if we freely choose the loss of a limb, rather than the whole body should perish, how much more should we choose, figuratively, to cut off a right hand, rather than the whole soul should be cast into hell !

14. We see plainly, then, both the nature and ground of taking up our cross. It does not imply the *disciplining ourselves* (as some speak), the literally tearing our own flesh ; the wearing hair-cloth, or iron girdles, or anything else that would impair our bodily health (although we know not

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14. Many of the Roman Catholic Mystics and saints have used these and similar means of mortifying the flesh ; so much so, that in their books, a discipline is often used in

the sense of a scourge. Madame Guyon describes how she flagellated herself with iron-pointed scourges every day, and tore her flesh with brambles and thorns ; she put worm-

what allowance God may make for those who act thus through involuntary ignorance), but the embracing the will of God, though contrary to our own ; the choosing wholesome, though bitter, medicines ; the freely accepting temporary pain, of whatever kind, and in whatever degree, when it is either essentially or accidentally necessary to eternal pleasure.

II. 1. I am, secondly, to show, that it is always owing to the want either of self-denial, or taking up his cross, that any man does not thoroughly follow Him, is not fully a disciple of Christ.

It is true, this may be partly owing, in some cases, to the want of the means of grace of hearing the true word of God spoken with power, of the sacraments, or of Christian fellowship. But where none of these is wanting, the great hindrance of our receiving or growing in the grace of God is always the want of denying ourselves, or taking up our cross.

2. A few instances will make this plain. A man hears the word which is able to save his soul : he is well pleased with what he hears, acknowledges the truth, and is a little affected by it ; yet he remains ' dead in trespasses and sins,' senseless and unawakened. Why is this ? Because he will not part with his bosom sin, though he now knows it is an abomination to the Lord. He came to hear, full of lust and unholy desires ; and he will not part with them. Therefore no deep impression is made upon him, but his foolish heart is still hardened : that is, he is still senseless and unawakened, because he will not deny himself.

3. Suppose he begins to awake out of sleep, and his eyes are a little opened, why are they so quickly closed again ? Why does he again sink into the sleep of death ? Because he again yields to his bosom sin ; he drinks again of the

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wood in her food, and had stones in her shoes ; all which, says Wesley, in a note in her *Life*, p. 42, ' show the strength of her zeal, and her great ignorance of the genuine gospel dis-

pensation.' Modern research makes it clear that this love of bodily tortures is really a perversion of the sexual instinct, and tends to insanity.

pleasing poison. Therefore it is impossible that any lasting impression should be made upon his heart ; that is, he relapses into his fatal insensibility, because he will not deny himself.

4. But this is not the case with all. We have many instances of those who when once awakened sleep no more. The impressions once received do not wear away : they are not only deep, but lasting. And yet, many of these have not found what they seek : they mourn, and yet are not comforted. Now, why is this ? It is because they do not ' bring forth fruits meet for repentance ' ; because they do not, according to the grace they have received, ' cease from evil, and do good.' They do not cease from the easily besetting sin, the sin of their constitution, of their education, or of their profession, or they omit doing the good they may, and know they ought to do, because of some disagreeable circumstances attending it that is, they do not attain faith, because they will not ' deny themselves,' or ' take up their cross.'

5. But this man did receive ' the heavenly gift ' ; he did ' taste of the powers of the world to come ' ; he saw ' the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ' ; the ' peace which passeth all understanding ' did rule his heart and mind ; and ' the love of God was shed abroad ' therein, ' by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him.' Yet he is now weak as another man ; he again relishes the things of earth, and has more taste for the things which are seen than for those which are not seen ; the eye of his understanding is closed again, so that he cannot ' see Him that is invisible ' ; his love is waxed cold, and the peace of God no longer rules in his heart. And no marvel ; for he has again given place to the devil, and grieved the Holy Spirit of God. He has

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II. 4. This is just what Wesley thought before his conversion ; but after that time he was so eager to show that faith is the only condition of salvation that he denied that any works done before conversion were acceptable to God. This extreme view he modified by degrees, and his

mature thought is expressed in the *Minutes* of 1770 already quoted (see Vol. i. p. 450), which were savagely denounced by the Calvinists of Lady Huntingdon's persuasion as teaching salvation by works. See note on Sermon L, iii. 1, 2.

turned again unto folly, to some pleasing sin, if not in outward act, yet in heart. He has given place to pride, or anger, or desire, to self-will or stubbornness. Or he did not stir up the gift of God which was in him, he gave way to spiritual sloth, and would not be at the pains of 'praying always, and watching thereunto with all perseverance': that is, he made shipwreck of the faith, for want of self-denial, and taking up his cross daily.

6. But perhaps he has not made shipwreck of the faith: he has still a measure of the Spirit of adoption, which continues to witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. However, he is not 'going on to perfection'; he is not, as once, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, panting after the whole image and full enjoyment of God, as the hart after the waterbrook. Rather he is weary and faint in his mind, and, as it were, hovering between life and death. And why is he thus, but because he hath forgotten the word of God, 'By works is faith made perfect'? He does not use all diligence in working the works of God. He does not 'continue instant in prayer,' private as well as public; in communicating, hearing, meditation, fasting, and religious conference. If he does not wholly neglect some of these means, at least he does not use them all with his might. Or he is not zealous of works of charity, as well as works of piety. He is not merciful after his power, with the full ability which God giveth. He does not fervently serve the Lord by doing good to men, in every kind and in every degree he can, to their souls as well as their bodies. And why does he not continue in prayer? Because in times of dryness it is pain and grief unto him. He does not continue in hearing at all opportunities, because sleep is sweet; or it is cold, or dark, or rainy. But why does he not continue in

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6. On the duty of reproving our neighbour, to which Wesley attached great importance, see Sermon XLIII. The seventh of the Twelve Rules of a Helper (*Large Minutes*, 1753, and all subsequent editions) is: 'Tell

every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and so soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.'

works of mercy? Because he cannot feed the hungry, or clothe the naked, unless he retrench the expense of his own apparel, or use cheaper and less pleasing food. Beside which, the visiting the sick, or those that are in prison, is attended with many disagreeable circumstances. And so are most works of spiritual mercy, reproof in particular. He *would* reprove his neighbour; but sometimes shame, sometimes fear, comes between, for he may expose himself, not only to ridicule, but to heavier inconveniences too. Upon these and the like considerations he omits one or more, if not all, works of mercy and piety. Therefore, his faith is not made perfect, neither can he grow in grace; namely, because he will not deny himself, and take up his daily cross.

7. It manifestly follows, that it is always owing to the want either of self-denial, or taking up his cross, that a man does not thoroughly follow his Lord, that he is not fully a disciple of Christ. It is owing to this, that he who is dead in sin does not awake, though the trumpet be blown; that he who begins to awake out of sleep, yet has no deep or lasting conviction; that he who is deeply and lastingly convinced of sin does not attain remission of sins; that some who have received this heavenly gift retain it not, but make shipwreck of the faith; and that others, if they do not draw back to perdition, yet are weary and faint in their mind, and do not reach the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

III. 1. How easily may we learn hence, that they know neither the Scripture nor the power of God, who directly or indirectly, in public or in private, oppose the doctrine of self-denial and the daily cross! How totally ignorant are these men of an hundred particular texts, as well as of the general tenor of the whole oracles of God! And how entirely unacquainted must they be with true, genuine, Christian experience—of the manner wherein the Holy Spirit ever did, and does at this day, work in the souls of men! They may talk, indeed, very loudly and confidently (a natural fruit of ignorance), as though they were the only men who understood

either the Word of God, or the experience of His children ; but their words are, in every sense, *vain words* , they are weighed in the balance, and found wanting.

2. We may learn from hence, secondly, the real cause why not only many particular persons, but even bodies of men, who were once burning and shining lights, have now lost both their light and heat. If they did not hate and oppose, they at least lightly esteemed, this precious gospel doctrine. If they did not boldly say, '*Abnegationem omnem proculcamus, internecioni damus*' , ' We trample all self-denial under foot, we devote it to destruction ' ; yet they neither valued it according to its high importance, nor took any pains in practising it. '*Hanc mystici docent*,' said that great, bad man ; ' the *mystic* writers teach self-denial.' No ; the *inspired* writers ! And God teaches it to every soul who is willing to hear His voice !

3. We may learn from hence, thirdly, that it is not enough for a minister of the gospel not to oppose the doctrine of self-denial, to say nothing concerning it. Nay, he cannot satisfy his duty by saying a little in favour of it. If he would, indeed, be pure from the blood of all men, he must speak of it frequently and largely ; he must inculcate the necessity of it in the clearest and strongest manner ; he must press it with his might, on all persons, at all times, and in all places ; laying ' line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept ' , so shall he have a conscience

III. 2. The reference is to the Moravians. In the Latin conversation which Wesley had with Count Zinzendorf in Gray's Inn Walks on September 3, 1741, the Count is reported to have said : '*Abnegationem omnem respuimus, conculcamus.*' Earlier in the conversation he says of inherent perfection, '*Ad internecionem do.*' Here Wesley, speaking from memory, combines the two phrases. It would seem that the subsequent words : '*Hanc Mystici docent*' were uttered by Zinzendorf,

though they do not appear in the report of the conversation in the *Journal*. It seems strange that Wesley should brand the Count as ' that great, bad man ' ; but he felt so strongly the evils of Antinomianism that his old admiration both for Zinzendorf and William Law was changed to indignation when, as it seemed to him, they taught doctrines which inevitably led, and in the London Societies did as a matter of fact lead, in that direction.

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void of offence ; so shall he save his own soul and those that hear him.

4. Lastly : see that you apply this, every one of you, to your own soul. Meditate upon it when you are in secret : ponder it in your heart ! Take care not only to understand it thoroughly, but to remember it to your lives' end ! Cry unto the Strong for strength, that you may no sooner understand, than enter upon the practice of it ! Delay not the time, but practise it immediately. from this very hour ! Practise it universally, on every one of the thousand occasions which occur in all circumstances of life ! Practise it daily, without intermission, from the hour you first set your hand to the plough, and enduring therein to the end, till your spirit returns to God !

## SERMON XLIII

### THE CURE OF EVIL-SPEAKING

THE first notice of this sermon is on February 5, 1752, when it was preached at Bristol. It was obviously suggested by the same outbreak of ill-natured gossip which led on January 29 to the signing of the following document by John and Charles Wesley and eleven of their preachers (see facsimile in Standard edition of *Journal*, iv. 9).

'It is agreed by us whose names are under-written :

1. That we will not listen, or willingly inquire after any ill concerning each other.
2. That, if we do hear any ill of each other, we will not be forward to believe it.
3. That, as soon as possible, we will communicate what we hear by speaking or writing to the person concerned.
4. That, till we have done this, we will not write or speak a syllable of it to any other person whatever.
5. That neither will we mention it, after we have done this, to any other person.
6. That we will not make any exception to any of these rules, unless we think ourselves absolutely obliged in conscience so to do.'

The sermon was preached six times more in 1752, once in 1753, and once in 1758. It was first published in Vol. IV of the sermons in 1760. Sermon LXV, on The Duty of Reproving our Neighbour, should be read and compared with it. It is an eminently practical and sensible discourse, and it would be well if its directions were faithfully observed. The Class-meeting system, which brings the members into such close and confidential relations with one another, is peculiarly liable to the danger of thoughtless or malicious gossip.

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*If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*—MATT. xviii. 15-17.

I. 'SPEAK evil of no man,' says the great Apostle : as plain a command as, 'Thou shalt do no murder.' But who, even

among Christians, regards this command? Yea, how few are there that so much as understand it! What is evil-speaking? It is not, as some suppose, the same with lying or slandering. All a man says may be as true as the Bible; and yet the saying of it is evil-speaking. For evil-speaking is neither more nor less than speaking evil of an absent person; relating something evil, which was really done or said by one that is not present when it is related. Suppose, having seen a man drunk, or heard him curse or swear, I tell this when he is absent, it is evil-speaking. In our language this is also, by an extremely proper name, termed 'backbiting.' Nor is there any material difference between this and what we usually style 'tale-bearing.' If the tale be delivered in a soft and quiet manner (perhaps with expressions of good-will to the person, and of hope that things may not be quite so bad), then we call it 'whispering.' But in whatever manner it be done, the thing is the same; the same in substance, if not in circumstance. Still it is evil-speaking; still this command, 'Speak evil of no man,' is trampled under foot; if we relate to another the fault of a third person, when he is not present to answer for himself.

2. And how extremely common is this sin, among all orders and degrees of men! How do high and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish, learned and unlearned, run into it continually! Persons who differ from each other in all things else, nevertheless agree in this. How few are there that can testify before God, 'I am clear in this matter, I have always set a watch before my mouth, and kept the door of my lips'! What conversation do you hear, of any considerable length, whereof evil-speaking is not one ingredient? and that even among persons who, in the general, have the fear of God before their eyes, and do really desire to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man.

3. And the very commonness of this sin makes it difficult to be avoided. As we are encompassed with it on every side, so, if we are not deeply sensible of the danger, and continually guarding against it, we are liable to be carried away by the torrent. In this instance, almost the whole of mankind is, as

it were, in a conspiracy against us. And their example steals upon us, we know not how ; so that we insensibly slide into the imitation of it. Besides, it is recommended from within, as well as from without. There is scarce any wrong temper in the mind of man, which may not be occasionally gratified by it, and consequently incline us to it. It gratifies our pride, to relate those faults of others whereof we think ourselves not to be guilty. Anger, resentment, and all unkind tempers, are indulged by speaking against those with whom we are displeased ; and, in many cases, by reciting the sins of their neighbours, men indulge their own foolish and hurtful desires.

4. Evil-speaking is the more difficult to be avoided, because it frequently attacks us in disguise. We speak thus out of a noble, generous (it is well if we do not say), holy indignation, against these vile creatures ! We commit sin from mere hatred of sin ! We serve the devil out of pure zeal for God ! It is merely in order to punish the wicked that we run into this wickedness. ‘ So do the passions ’ (as one speaks) ‘ all justify themselves,’ and palm sin upon us under the veil of holiness !

5. But is there no way to avoid the snare ? Unquestionably there is. Our blessed Lord has marked out a plain way for His followers, in the words above recited. None, who warily and steadily walk in this path, will ever fall into evil-speaking. This rule is either an infallible preventive, or a certain cure of it. In the preceding verses, our Lord had said, ‘ Woe to the world, because of offences,’—unspeakable misery will arise in the world from this baleful fountain (*offences* are all things whereby any one is turned out of, or hindered in, the ways of God) : ‘ For it must be that offences come,’—such is the nature of things ; such the wickedness, folly, and weakness of mankind : ‘ but woe to that man,’—miserable is that man, ‘ by whom the offence cometh.’ ‘ Wherefore, if thy hand, thy foot, thine eye, cause thee to offend,’—if the most dear enjoyment, the most beloved and useful person, turn thee out of or hinder thee in the way, ‘ pluck it out,’—cut them off, and cast them from thee. But how

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Par. 4. ‘ As one speaks.’ Who is this ?

can we avoid giving offence to some, and being offended at others? especially, suppose they are quite in the wrong, and we see it with our own eyes? Our Lord here teaches us how He lays down a sure method of avoiding offences and evil-speaking together. 'If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.'

I. 1. First. 'If thy brother shall sin against thee, go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone.' The most literal way of following this first rule, where it is practicable, is the best: therefore, if thou seest with thine own eyes a brother, a fellow Christian, commit undeniable sin, or hearest it with thine own ears, so that it is impossible for thee to doubt the fact, then thy part is plain: take the very first opportunity of going to him; and, if thou canst have access, 'tell him of his fault between thee and him alone.' Indeed, great care is to be taken that this is done in a right spirit, and in a right manner. The success of a reproof greatly depends on the spirit wherein it is given. Be not, therefore, wanting in earnest prayer to God, that it may be given in a lowly spirit; with a deep, piercing conviction, that it is God alone who maketh thee to differ, and that if any good be done by what is now spoken, God doeth it Himself. Pray that He would guard thy heart, enlighten thy mind, and direct thy tongue to such words as He may please to bless. See that thou speak in a meek as well as a lowly spirit; for the 'wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' If

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I. 1. Wesley enlarges the scope of this precept beyond its legitimate meaning. It speaks, not of sin in general, but of sin 'against thee.' It is easy to see what an intolerable

state of things would be brought about if every member of the church regarded himself as a censor-general of the conduct of all the rest. It is only sins against ourselves, wrongs

he be 'overtaken in a fault,' he can no otherwise be restored, than 'in the spirit of meekness.' If he opposes the truth, yet he cannot be brought to the knowledge thereof, but by gentleness. Still speak in a spirit of tender love, 'which many waters cannot quench.' If love is not conquered, it conquers all things. Who can tell the force of love?

Love can bow down the stubborn neck,  
The stone to flesh convert;  
Soften, and melt, and pierce, and break  
An adamantine heart.

Confirm, then, your love toward him, and you will thereby 'heap coals of fire upon his head.'

2. But see that the manner also wherein you speak be according to the gospel of Christ. Avoid everything in look, gesture, word, and tone of voice, that savours of pride or self-sufficiency. Studiously avoid everything magisterial or dogmatical, everything that looks like arrogance or assuming. Beware of the most distant approach to disdain, overbearing, or contempt. With equal care avoid all appearance of anger; and though you use great plainness of speech, yet let there be no reproach, no railing accusation, no token of any warmth but that of love. Above all, let there be no shadow of hate or ill-will, no bitterness or sourness of expression; but use the air and language of sweetness as well as gentleness, that all may appear to flow from love in the heart. And yet this sweetness need not hinder your speaking in the most serious and solemn manner; as far as may be, in the very words of the oracles of God (for there are none like them), and as under the eye of Him who is coming to judge the quick and dead.

or injuries inflicted upon ourselves, that we are instructed to deal with in this way.

The quotation is verse 6 of Charles Wesley's hymn entitled 'Against Hope, Believing in Hope,' first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1740. Eleven of the original twelve verses are Hymn 361 in the 1876

Hymn-Book; and seven of them form Hymn 537 in the present Hymn-Book, this verse being one of those omitted. Note incidentally the old pronunciation of 'convert' as 'convart' to rhyme with 'heart.' This was the usual pronunciation in the eighteenth century.

3. If you have not an opportunity of speaking to him in person, or cannot have access, you may do it by a messenger, by a common friend, in whose prudence, as well as uprightness, you can thoroughly confide. Such a person, speaking in your name, and in the spirit and manner above described, may answer the same end, and, in a good degree, supply your lack of service. Only beware you do not feign the want of opportunity, in order to shun the cross; neither take it for granted that you cannot have access, without ever making the trial. Whenever you can speak in your own person, it is far better. But you should rather do it by another, than not at all: this way is better than none.

4. But what, if you can neither speak yourself, nor find such a messenger as you can confide in? If this be really the case, it then only remains to write. And there may be some circumstances which make this the most advisable way of speaking. One of these circumstances is, when the person with whom we have to do is of so warm and impetuous a temper as does not easily bear reproof, especially from an equal or inferior. But it may be so introduced and softened in writing as to make it far more tolerable. Besides, many will read the very same words, which they could not bear to hear. It does not give so violent a shock to their pride, nor so sensibly touch their honour. And suppose it makes little impression at first, they will, perhaps, give it a second reading, and, upon farther consideration, lay to heart what before they disregarded. If you add your name, this is nearly the same thing as going to him, and speaking in person. And this should always be done, unless it be rendered improper by some very particular reason.

5. It should be well observed, not only that this is a step which our Lord absolutely commands us to take, but that He commands us to take this step first, before we attempt

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4. It would be well if all Methodists would note and observe Wesley's wise prohibition of anonymous letters, whether addressed to the individual privately, or to the Press. It

must be some 'very particular reason' to justify this cowardly sort of attack upon another's character or conduct.

any other. No alternative is allowed, no choice of anything else : this is the way ; walk thou in it. It is true, He enjoins us, if need require, to take two other steps , but they are to be taken successively after this step, and neither of them before it much less are we to take any other step, either before or beside this. To do anything else, or not to do this, is, therefore, equally inexcusable.

6. Do not think to excuse yourself for taking an entirely different step, by saying, ' Why, I did not speak to any one, till I was so burdened that I could not refrain.' You was burdened ! It was no wonder you should, unless your conscience was seared ; for you was under the guilt of sin, of disobeying a plain commandment of God ! You ought immediately to have gone, and told ' your brother of his fault between you and him alone.' If you did not, how should you be other than burdened (unless your heart was utterly hardened), while you was trampling the command of God under foot, and ' hating your brother in your heart ' ? And what a way you have found to unburden yourself ! God reproves you for a sin of omission, for not telling your brother of his fault ; and you comfort yourself under His reproof by a sin of commission, by telling your brother's fault to another person ! Ease bought by sin is a dear purchase ! I trust in God, you will have no ease, but will be burdened so much the more, till you ' go to your brother and tell him,' and no one else.

7. I know but of one exception to this rule : there may be a peculiar case, wherein it is necessary to accuse the guilty, though absent, in order to preserve the innocent. For instance : you are acquainted with the design which a man has against the property or life of his neighbour. Now, the case may be so circumstanced, that there is no other way of hindering that design from taking effect, but the making it known, without delay, to him against whom it is laid. In this case, therefore, this rule is set aside, as is that of the Apostle, ' Speak evil of no man ' : and it is lawful, yea, it is our bounden duty, to speak evil of an absent person, in order to prevent his doing evil to others and himself at the same time. But remember,

meanwhile, that all evil-speaking is, in its own nature, deadly poison. Therefore if you are sometimes constrained to use it as a medicine, yet use it with fear and trembling, seeing it is so dangerous a medicine, that nothing but absolute necessity can excuse your using it at all. Accordingly, use it as seldom as possible, never but when there is such a necessity: and even then use as little of it as is possible, only so much as is necessary for the end proposed. At all other times, 'go and tell him of his fault between thee and him alone.'

II. 1. But what, 'if he will not hear'? if he repay evil for good? if he be enraged rather than convinced? What, if he hear to no purpose, and go on still in the evil of his way? We must expect this will frequently be the case; the mildest and tenderest reproof will have no effect; but the blessing we wished for another will return into our own bosom. And what are we to do then? Our Lord has given us a clear and full direction. Then 'take with thee one or two more': this is the second step. Take one or two whom you know to be of a loving spirit, lovers of God and of their neighbour. See, likewise, that they be of a lowly spirit, and 'clothed with humility.' Let them also be such as are meek and gentle, patient and long-suffering; not apt to 'return evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing.' Let them be men of understanding, such as are endued with wisdom from above; and men unbiassed, free from partiality, free from prejudice of any kind. Care should likewise be taken, that both the persons and their characters be well known to him: and let those that are acceptable to him be chosen preferable to any others.

2. Love will dictate the manner wherein they should proceed, according to the nature of the case. Nor can any one particular manner be prescribed for all cases. But perhaps, in general, one might advise, before they enter upon the thing itself, let them mildly and affectionately declare that they have no anger or prejudice toward him, and that it is merely from a principle of good-will that they now come, or at all concern themselves with his affairs. To make this the more

apparent, they might then calmly attend to your repetition of your former conversation with him, and to what he said in his own defence, before they attempted to determine anything. After this they would be better able to judge in what manner to proceed, 'that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word might be established'; that whatever you have said may have its full force by the additional weight of their authority.

3. In order to this, may they not, (1) Briefly repeat what you spoke, and what he answered? (2) Enlarge upon, open, and confirm the reasons which you had given? (3) Give weight to your reproof, showing how just, how kind, and how seasonable it was? And, lastly, enforce the advices and persuasions which you had annexed to it? And these may likewise hereafter, if need should require, bear witness of what was spoken.

4. With regard to this, as well as the preceding rule, we may observe, that our Lord gives us no choice, leaves us no alternative, but expressly commands us to do this, and nothing else in the place of it. He likewise directs us when to do this; neither sooner nor later, namely, *after* we have taken the first, and *before* we have taken the third step. It is then only that we are authorized to relate the evil another has done, to those whom we desire to bear a part with us in this great instance of brotherly love. But let us have a care how we relate it to any other person, till both these steps have been taken. If we neglect to take these, or if we take any others, what wonder if we are burdened still? For we are sinners against God, and against our neighbour; and how fairly soever we may colour it, yet, if we have any conscience, our sin will find us out, and bring a burden upon our soul.

III. 1. That we may be thoroughly instructed in this weighty affair, our Lord has given us a still farther direction: 'If he will not hear them,' then, and not till then, 'tell it to the church.' This is the third step. All the question is,

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III. 1. See Sermon LXXIV on church is, as verse 20 indicates, two  
The Church. The germ-cell of the or three gathered together in the

how this word, 'the church,' is here to be understood. But the very nature of the thing will determine this beyond all reasonable doubt. You cannot tell it to the national Church, the whole body of men termed 'the Church of England.' Neither would it answer any Christian end if you could: this, therefore, is not the meaning of the word. Neither can you tell it to that whole body of people in England with whom you have a more immediate connexion. Nor, indeed, would this answer any good end: the word, therefore, is not to be understood thus. It would not answer any valuable end to tell the faults of every particular member to the church (if you would so term it), the congregation or society, united together in London. It remains that you tell it to the elder or elders of the church, to those who are overseers of that flock of Christ to which you both belong, who watch over yours and his soul, 'as they that must give account.' And this should be done, if it conveniently can, in the presence of the person concerned, and, though plainly, yet with all the tenderness and love which the nature of the thing will admit. It properly belongs to their office, to determine concerning the behaviour of those under their care, and to rebuke, according to the demerit of the offence, 'with all authority.' When, therefore, you have done this, you have done all which the Word of God, or the law of love, requireth of you: you are not now partaker of his sin: but if he perish, his blood is on his own head.

2. Here, also, let it be observed, that this, and no other, is the third step which we are to take; and that we are to take it in its order after the other two; not before the second, much less the first, unless in some very particular circumstance. Indeed, in one case, the second step may coincide with this: they may be, in a manner, one and the same. The elder or elders of the church may be so connected with the

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name of Christ, with Christ in the midst of them. The organization of these units into larger bodies, determined by local or doctrinal or administrative conditions, is a secondary matter. In the Methodist

Church, the body to whom complaints about the character of members are to be addressed is in the first instance the Leaders' Meeting, which, of course, includes the minister of the church.

offending brother, that they may set aside the necessity, and supply the place, of the one or two witnesses, so that it may suffice to tell it to them, after you have told it to your brother, 'between you and him alone.'

3. When you have done this, you have delivered your own soul. 'If he will not hear the church,' if he persist in his sin, 'let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican.' You are under no obligation to think of him any more; only when you commend him to God in prayer. You need not speak of him any more, but leave him to his own Master. Indeed, you still owe to him, as to all other Heathens, earnest, tender good-will. You owe him courtesy, and, as occasion offers, all the offices of humanity. But have no friendship, no familiarity with him; no other intercourse than with an open Heathen.

4. But if this be the rule by which Christians walk, which is the land where the Christians live? A few you may possibly find scattered up and down, who make a conscience of observing it. But how very few! How thinly scattered upon the face of the earth! And where is there any body of men that universally walk thereby? Can we find them in Europe? or, to go no farther, in Great Britain or Ireland? I fear not. I fear we may search these kingdoms throughout, and yet search in vain. Alas for the Christian world! Alas for Protestants, for Reformed Christians! Oh, 'who will rise up with me against the wicked?' 'Who will take God's part' against the evil-speakers? Art thou the man? By the grace of God, wilt thou be one who art not carried away by the torrent? Art thou fully determined, God being thy helper, from this very hour to set a watch, a continual 'watch, before thy mouth, and keep the door of thy lips'? From this hour wilt thou walk by this rule, 'Speaking evil of no man'? If thou seest thy brother do evil, wilt thou 'tell him of his fault between thee and him alone'? afterwards, 'take one or two' witnesses, and then only 'tell it to the church'?

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3. Note the qualification, that publican, courtesy and all the offices even to the heathen man and the of humanity are still due.

If this be the full purpose of thy heart, then learn one lesson well, 'Hear evil of no man.' If there were no hearers, there would be no speakers, of evil. And is not (according to the vulgar proverb) the receiver as bad as the thief? If, then, any begin to speak evil in thy hearing, check him immediately. Refuse to hear the voice of the charmer, charm he never so sweetly; let him use ever so soft a manner, so mild an accent, ever so many professions of good-will for him whom he is stabbing in the dark, whom he smiteth under the fifth rib! Resolutely refuse to hear, though the whisperer complain of being 'burdened till he speak.' *Burdened!* thou fool! dost thou travail with thy cursed secret, as a woman travaileth with child? Go, then, and be delivered of thy burden in the way the Lord hath ordained! First, 'go and tell thy brother of his fault between thee and him alone': next, 'take with thee one or two' common friends, and tell him in their presence: if neither of these steps take effect, then 'tell it to the church.' But, at the peril of thy soul, tell it to no one else, either before or after, unless in that one exempt case, when it is absolutely needful to preserve the innocent! Why shouldest thou burden another as well as thyself, by making him partaker of thy sin?

5. Oh that all you who bear the reproach of Christ, who are in derision called Methodists, would set an example to the Christian world, so called, at least in this one instance! Put ye away evil-speaking, tale-bearing, whispering let none of them proceed out of your mouth! See that you 'speak evil of no man'; of the absent, nothing but good. If ye must be distinguished, whether ye will or no, let this be the distinguishing mark of a Methodist 'He censures no man behind his back: by this fruit ye may know him.' What a blessed effect of this self-denial should we quickly feel in our hearts! How would our 'peace flow as a river,' when we thus 'followed peace with all men'! How would the love of God abound in our own souls, while we thus confirmed our love to our brethren! And what an effect would it have on all that were united together in the name of the Lord Jesus! How would brotherly love continually increase, when

this grand hindrance of it was removed ! All the members of Christ's mystical body would then naturally care for each other. ' If one member suffered, all would suffer with it ' ; ' if one was honoured, all would rejoice with it ' ; and every one would love his brother ' with a pure heart fervently.' Nor is this all but what an effect might this have, even on the wild unthinking world ! How soon would they descry in us, what they could not find among all the thousands of their brethren, and cry (as Julian the apostate to his heathen courtiers), ' See how these Christians love one another ! ' By this chiefly would God convince the world, and prepare them also for His kingdom ; as we may easily learn from those remarkable words in our Lord's last, solemn prayer : ' I pray for them who shall believe in Me, that they may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.' The Lord hasten the time ! The Lord enable us thus to love one another, not only ' in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth,' even as Christ hath loved us !

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5. The origin of this often quoted sentence is to be found in Tertullian's *Apologeticus*, c. 39, ' But it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. See, they say, how they love one another ; how they are ready even to die for one another.' Julian, in *Ep.* 49, ascribes the success of Christianity mainly to the charity of

the Christians, which he holds up as an example to those who wished with him to revive the old Pagan worship and religion ; and he points out that the Pagans have allowed the ' godless Galilaeans ' to relieve even the Pagan poor, instead of doing so themselves. But the phrase quoted was not used by Julian.

## SERMON XLIV

### THE USE OF MONEY

At the beginning of 1744 London was thrown into a state of almost panic alarm by the news that the Young Pretender had arrived in France, and that he was making preparations to invade England. On February 15 the King communicated the intelligence to the Houses of Parliament, and a general fast-day was proclaimed for Friday the 17th. Wesley says, 'We observed Friday the 17th as a day of solemn fasting and prayer. In the afternoon, many being met together,' (presumably at the Foundery), 'I exhorted them now, while they had opportunity, to make to themselves "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness"; to deal their bread to the hungry, to clothe the naked, and not to hide themselves from their own flesh. And God opened their hearts, so that they contributed near fifty pounds, which I began laying out the very next hour in linen, woollen, and shoes for those whom I knew to be diligent and yet in want.' Ten days later a second collection was made of about thirty pounds; astonishingly generous gifts, for they would be worth altogether at least £300 as money goes now; and the London Society was almost entirely made up of poor people. It may be worth while to remember that this was the year of the first Methodist Conference, and of Wesley's last University Sermon (No. IV on Scriptural Christianity).

The text is mentioned in the Sermon Register once in 1748, seven times in the latter part of 1750, five times in 1751, six times in 1752, and twice in 1753. It occurs once again in 1757, and the sermon was first published in Vol. IV of the Sermons in 1760. The substance of its teaching will be found in Sermon XXIII; and in the later Sermons LXXXVII, CVIII, and CXXVI. In Sermon LXXXVII, which was written in Wesley's seventy-eighth year, i.e. in 1780, he says, 'I do not remember that in three-score years I have heard one sermon preached upon this subject. I have myself frequently touched upon it in preaching, and twice in what I have published to the world; once in explaining our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and once in the discourse on The Mammon of Unrighteousness; but I have never yet either published or preached any sermon expressly upon the subject'—i.e. the danger of riches. In Sermon CVIII he speaks of himself as

'stumbling upon the dark mountains,' and says, 'I would fain leave one word with you before I go hence'; and Sermon CXXVI is dated September 21, 1790. Similar teaching is found in Sermon LXVIII, 16, and CXVI, 8. The famous 'three plain rules'—Gain all you can, Save all you can, Give all you can—are repeated in all the later sermons, and in many other places; and if they were universally practised, they would prove themselves the best preventive and remedy of the distrust and hatred of the capitalists by the working classes.

In the *Minutes* for 1766 it is lamented that 'many Methodists grow rich, and thereby lovers of the present world'; and it is suggested that the sermons in the fourth volume should be publicly read everywhere, as supplying them with remedies suited to the disease. As years went on, Wesley became more and more concerned about this matter. In Sermon LXVIII, 16, he says, 'I have not known three-score rich persons, perhaps not half the number, during three-score years, who, as far as I can judge, were not less holy than they would have been had they been poor.' In Sermon CXVI, 9, he breaks out, 'O that God would enable me once more, before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who gain and save all they can, but do not give all they can. . . I am distressed. I know not what to do. The Methodists grow more and more self-indulgent, because they grow rich. And it is an observation which admits of few exceptions, that nine in ten of these decreased in grace in the same proportion as they increased in wealth.' In Sermon CXXVI, 16, he appeals with touching pathos to the rich Methodists. 'After having served you between sixty and seventy years, with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you one more advice before I sink into the dust.' . . . I am pained for you who are rich in this world. Do you give all you can? I pray consider, what are you the better for what you leave behind you? What does it signify, whether you leave behind you ten thousand pounds, or ten thousand shoes and boots? O leave nothing behind you! Send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it, lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid you again. Is there any danger that *His* truth should fail?' .

And Wesley practised what he preached. In Sermon LXXXVII, ii. 6, he says, 'Permit me to speak as freely of myself as I would of another man. I gain all I can (namely, by writing) without hurting either soul or body. I save all I can, not willingly wasting anything, not a sheet of paper, not a cup of water. I do not lay out anything, not a shilling, unless as a sacrifice to God. Yet by giving all I can, I am effectually secured from laying up treasure upon earth. I cannot help leaving my books behind me, whenever God calls me hence; but in every other respect my own hands will be my executors.' At the end of Sermon CXVI, written in 1789, he says, 'I call God to

record upon my soul that I advise no more than I practise. I do, blessed be God, gain, and save, and give all I can.' On August 1, 1790, he writes in his Diary, 'As my sight fails me much, I do not purpose to keep any more accounts. It suffices that I gain all I can, I save all I can, and I give all I can, that is, all I have.—J. W.' His challenge that, if he left more than £10 in his will, any one could call him a thief and a liar, was redeemed; apart from his book-concern, he only left the loose money in his clothes and bureau, and £6 for the poor men who should carry his body to the grave. During the latter part of his life he gave away from the profits of his books about £1,000 a year; and he is computed to have bestowed in charity not less than £30,000 during his lifetime.

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*I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*—LUKE xvi. 9.

1. OUR Lord, having finished the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, which He had particularly addressed to those who murmured at His receiving publicans and sinners, adds another relation of a different kind, addressed rather to the children of God. 'He said unto His disciples'—not so much to the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom He had been speaking before—'There was a certain rich man, who had a steward, and he was accused to him of wasting his goods. And calling him, he said, Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou canst be no longer steward' (verses 1, 2). After reciting the method which the bad steward used to provide against the day of necessity, our Saviour adds, 'His lord commended the unjust steward'; namely, in this respect, that he used timely precaution; and subjoins this weighty reflection, 'The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light' (verse 8) those who seek no other portion than this world 'are wiser' (not absolutely, for they are, one and all, the veriest fools, the most egregious madmen under heaven; but, 'in their generation,' in their own way; they are more consistent with themselves; they are truer to their

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Par. 1. 'His lord' is a much better rendering than the A.V. 'the lord,' which has been often misunderstood, as if it was Jesus who commended

acknowledged principles; they more steadily pursue their end) 'than the children of light,'—than they who see 'the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' Then follow the words above recited: 'And I'—the only-begotten Son of God, the Creator, Lord, and possessor of heaven and earth, and all that is therein; the Judge of all, to whom ye are to 'give an account of your stewardship,' when ye 'can be no longer stewards', 'I say unto you'—learn in this respect, even of the unjust steward—'make yourselves friends,' by wise, timely precaution, 'of the mammon of unrighteousness.' 'Mammon' means riches, or money. It is termed 'the mammon of unrighteousness,' because of the unrighteous manner wherein it is frequently procured, and wherein even that which was honestly procured is generally employed. 'Make yourselves friends' of this, by doing all possible good, particularly to the children of God; 'that, when ye fail'—when ye return to dust, when ye have no more place under the sun—those of them who are gone before 'may receive you,' may welcome you, into 'everlasting habitations.'

2. An excellent branch of Christian wisdom is here inculcated by our Lord on all His followers, namely, the right use of money,—a subject largely spoken of, after their manner, by men of the world, but not sufficiently considered by those whom God hath chosen out of the world. These, generally, do not consider, as the importance of the subject requires, the use of this excellent talent. Neither do they understand how to employ it to the greatest advantage, the introduction of which into the world is one admirable instance of the wise and gracious providence of God. It has, indeed, been the manner of poets, orators, and philosophers, in almost all ages and nations, to rail at this, as the grand corrupter of the world, the bane of virtue, the pest of human society. Hence, nothing so commonly heard, as

*Ferrum, ferroque nocentius aurum :*

(And gold, more mischievous than keenest steel.)

the unjust steward; though of course the translators did not mean that.

On the word Mammon, see note on Sermon XXIV, 4.

2. The first Latin line is from

Hence the lamentable complaint,

*Effodiuntur opes, irritamenta malorum.*

(Wealth is dug up, incentive to all ill.)

Nay, one celebrated writer gravely exhorts his countrymen, in order to banish all vice at once, to 'throw all their money into the sea':

*In mare proximum,*

*Summi materiem mali!*

But is not all this mere empty rant? Is there any solid reason therein? By no means. For, let the world be as corrupt as it will, is gold or silver to blame? 'The love of money,' we know, 'is the root of all evil', but not the thing itself. The fault does not lie in the money, but in them that use it. It may be used ill: and what may not? But it may likewise be used well—it is full as applicable to the best, as to the worst uses. It is of unspeakable service to all civilized nations, in all the common affairs of life: it is a most compendious instrument of transacting all manner of business, and (if we use it according to Christian wisdom) of doing all manner of good. It is true, were man in a state of innocence, or were all men 'filled with the Holy Ghost,' so that, like the infant church at Jerusalem, 'no man counted anything

Ovid's description of the fourth or iron age in *Met.* i. 1, 141; the next is the previous line (140).

'One celebrated writer.' Wesley is a little more polite than usual to the 'poor wretch,' 'the stupid heathen,' as he elsewhere calls him. The passage is quoted from Horace, *Odes*, iii. 24, 47, but in calling it 'empty rant' he convicts himself of not having taken the trouble to read the context and get the poet's meaning. It runs in full:

*Vel nos in Capitolium*

*Quo clamor vocat ac turba faventium;*

*Vel nos in mare proximum*

*Gemmas et lapides, aurum et inutile,*

*Summi materiem mali,*

*Mittamus.*

Horace is denouncing the pernicious

effects of the love of wealth on the Roman State; and he bids the wealthy either to dedicate their gems and jewels and harmful gold to the public service by placing them in the treasury of Jupiter in the Capitoline temple, amid the applause of the crowd; or, if they will not do that, to throw them into the nearest sea, as the source and ground of supreme mischief. This is just what Wesley himself advises: either give your money to God in the service of your fellow men, or else throw it away, so that it will not be able to hurt you any more.

What St. Paul does say (1 Tim. vi. 10) is, 'The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.'

he had his own,' but 'distribution was made to every one as he had need,' the use of it would be superseded ; as we cannot conceive there is anything of the kind among the inhabitants of heaven. But, in the present state of mankind, it is an excellent gift of God, answering the noblest ends. In the hands of His children, it is food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, raiment for the naked : it gives to the traveller and the stranger where to lay his head. By it we may supply the place of an husband to the widow, and of a father to the fatherless. We may be a defence for the oppressed, a means of health to the sick, of ease to them that are in pain ; it may be as eyes to the blind, as feet to the lame ; yea, a lifter up from the gates of death.

3. It is, therefore, of the highest concern, that all who fear God know how to employ this valuable talent ; that they be instructed how it may answer these glorious ends, and in the highest degree. And, perhaps, all the instructions which are necessary for this may be reduced to three plain rules, by the exact observance whereof we may approve ourselves faithful stewards of 'the mammon of unrighteousness.'

I. 1. The first of these is (he that heareth, let him understand !) 'Gain all you can.' Here we may speak like the children of the world : we meet them on their own ground. And it is our bounden duty to do this : we ought to gain all we can gain, without buying gold too dear, without paying more for it than it is worth. But this it is certain we ought not to do ; we ought not to gain money at the expense of life, nor (which is in effect the same thing) at the expense of our health. Therefore, no gain whatsoever should induce us to enter into, or to continue in, any employ, which is of such a kind, or is attended with so hard or so long labour, as to impair our constitution. Neither should we begin or continue in any business which necessarily deprives us of proper seasons for food and sleep, in such a proportion as our nature requires. Indeed, there is a great difference here.

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I. 1. In this denunciation of noxious trades Wesley was 150 years ahead of his time. See Robert Sherard's *White Slaves of England*,

Some employments are absolutely and totally unhealthy ; as those which imply the dealing much with arsenic, or other equally hurtful minerals, or the breathing an air tainted with streams of melting lead, which must at length destroy the firmest constitution. Others may not be absolutely unhealthy, but only to persons of a weak constitution. Such are those which require many hours to be spent in writing ; especially if a person write sitting, and lean upon his stomach, or remain long in an uneasy posture. But whatever it is which reason or experience shows to be destructive of health or strength, that we may not submit to ; seeing ' the life is more ' valuable ' than meat, and the body than raiment ' : and, if we are already engaged in such an employ, we should exchange it, as soon as possible, for some which, if it lessen our gain, will, however, not lessen our health.

2. We are, secondly, to gain all we can without hurting our mind, any more than our body. For neither may we hurt this we must preserve, at all events, the spirit of an healthful mind. Therefore, we may not engage or continue in any sinful trade ; any that is contrary to the law of God, or of our country. Such are all that necessarily imply our robbing or defrauding the king of his lawful customs. For it is, at least, as sinful to defraud the king of his right, as to rob our fellow subjects and the king has full as much right to his customs as we have to our houses and apparel. Other busi-

published in 1897, in which the terrible conditions under which the alkali workers, the nail-makers, the slipper-makers, the wool-combers, the white-lead workers, and the chain-makers are compelled to labour, are fearlessly exposed.

2. Smuggling was universal in the eighteenth century, especially in the coast counties. In *Minutes*, 1767, it is asked, ' How may we put a stop to smuggling ? ' and the answer is ' (1) Speak tenderly and frequently of it in every society near the coasts ; (2) Carefully disperse the *Word to a Smuggler* ; (3) Expel all who will

not leave it off ; (4) Silence every local preacher that defends it.' The *Word to a Smuggler* was published in January 1767. In 1757 Wesley told the society at Sunderland that he would no more suffer the buying or selling of uncustomed goods than robbing on the highway. In 1764 he wrote to the societies at Bristol, ' Neither sell nor buy anything that has not paid the duty ; no, not if you could have it at half price. Defraud not the King, any more than your fellow subject.' Have all the Methodists, especially in the United States and in Australia, reached

nesses there are which, however innocent in themselves, cannot be followed with innocence now ; at least not in England ; such, for instance, as will not afford a competent maintenance without cheating or lying, or conformity to some custom which is not consistent with a good conscience : these, likewise, are sacredly to be avoided, whatever gain they may be attended with, provided we follow the custom of the trade, for, to gain money, we must not lose our souls. There are yet others which many pursue with perfect innocence, without hurting either their body or mind, and yet, perhaps, you cannot : either they may entangle you in that company which would destroy your soul ; and by repeated experiments it may appear that you cannot separate the one from the other ; or there may be an idiosyncrasy—a peculiarity in your constitution of soul (as there is in the bodily constitution of many), by reason whereof that employment is deadly to you, which another may safely follow. So I am convinced, from many experiments, I could not study, to any degree of perfection, either mathematics, arithmetic, or algebra, without being a Deist, if not an Atheist : and yet others may study them all their lives without sustaining any inconvenience. None, therefore, can here determine for another ; but every man must judge for himself, and abstain from whatever he in particular finds to be hurtful to his soul.

3. We are, thirdly, to gain all we can, without hurting our neighbour. But this we may not, cannot do, if we love our neighbour as ourselves. We cannot, if we love every one as ourselves, hurt any one *in his substance*. We cannot devour the increase of his lands, and perhaps the lands and houses themselves, by gaming, by overgrown bills (whether on account of physic, or law, or anything else), or by requiring

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Wesley's level of morality in this matter ?

Wesley's feeling about the tendency of mathematical studies is interesting. It is just the opposite of Wordsworth's, who records in *Prelude* vi. 115, how he found ' both elevation and composed delight ' in

geometric science, and drew from it

A pleasure quiet and profound, a sense  
Of permanent and universal sway,  
And paramount belief ; there recognized  
A type, for finite natures, of the one  
Supreme Existence which . . . is  
And hath the name of God.

3. Under 12 Anne c. 16 the highest

or taking such interest as even the laws of our country forbid. Hereby all pawnbroking is excluded : seeing, whatever good we might do thereby, all unprejudiced men see with grief to be abundantly overbalanced by the evil. And if it were otherwise, yet we are not allowed to 'do evil that good may come.' We cannot, consistent with brotherly love, sell our goods below the market price ; we cannot study to ruin our neighbour's trade, in order to advance our own, much less can we entice away, or receive, any of his servants or workmen whom he has need of. None can gain by swallowing up his neighbour's substance, without gaining the damnation of hell !

4. Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbour *in his body*. Therefore we may not sell anything which tends to impair health. Such is, eminently, all that liquid fire, commonly called drams, or spirituous liquors. It is true, these may have a place in medicine ; they may be of use in some bodily disorders ; although there would rarely be occasion for them, were it not for the unskilfulness of the practitioner.

rate of interest permitted to be charged was 5 per cent. This was the law until 1839.

Pawnbroking originated in Italy, as the three golden pills which are still the pawnbroker's sign, taken from the arms of the Medici of Florence, bear witness. The Lombard goldsmiths introduced it into England. In modern times it has become a means for helping the poor to tide over temporary financial difficulty ; but whilst it has its useful aspect, on the whole, as Wesley saw, its effect is evil in encouraging thriftlessness and improvidence ; the pawnbroker's shop is the door to the gin-palace, and provides an easy means of getting rid of stolen property. One can imagine a conscientious and philanthropic pawnbroker, carrying on his business on Christian principles ; but it would be difficult to find a specimen.

4. Wesley was not a teetotaler ; indeed, he recommends his preachers to drink small beer rather than tea ; but he carried on a valiant crusade against the drinking of drams—i.e. brandy, rum, whisky, and gin—which were usually taken neat in the eighteenth century. In the *Minutes* of 1765 he asks, 'How shall we cure (our people) of drinking drams ?' and answers, '(1) Let no preacher drink any, on any pretence ; (2) Strongly dissuade our people from it ; (3) Answer their pretences ; particularly those of curing the colic and helping digestion.' Writing to Hugh Saunderson, an Irish preacher, in 1769, he says, 'Touch no dram. It is liquid fire. It is a sure though slow poison. It saps the very springs of life. In Ireland, above all countries in the world, I would sacredly abstain from this, because the evil is so general.' This vigorous para-

Therefore, such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clear. But who are they? Who prepare them only for this end? Do you know ten such distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder His Majesty's subjects by wholesale, neither does their eye pity or spare. They drive them to hell, like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who then would envy their large estates and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them: the curse of God cleaves to the stones, the timber, the furniture of them! The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell! Blood, blood is there: the foundation, the floor, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O thou man of blood, though thou art 'clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day'; canst thou hope to deliver down thy *fields of blood* to the third generation? Not so; for there is a God in heaven: therefore, thy name shall soon be rooted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, 'thy memorial shall perish with thee!'

5. And are not they partakers of the same guilt, though in a lower degree, whether surgeons, apothecaries, or physicians, who play with the lives or health of men, to enlarge their own gain? who purposely lengthen the pain or disease, which they are able to remove speedily? who protract the cure of their patient's body, in order to plunder his substance? Can any man be clear before God, who does not shorten every disorder 'as much as he can,' and remove all sickness and

graph leaves no doubt as to which side Wesley would have taken in the Prohibition campaign.

'Fields of blood.' The field purchased by Judas Iscariot with his thirty pieces of silver was called, according to Acts i. 19, Akeldama, or the Field of Blood, because he hung himself there; Matthew (xxvii. 8) gives a different account of the matter, and tells us that the priests

bought the field as a burying-place for strangers with the money that Judas flung back to them. But in any case it was bought with the price of blood; and that is what Wesley means here. The estates of the distillers are bought with the price of the blood of their victims.

5. Happily, such cases are rare indeed in our day.

pain 'as soon as he can' ? He cannot : for nothing can be more clear, than that he does not ['love his neighbour as himself' ; than that he does not]<sup>1</sup> 'do unto others, as he would they should do unto himself.'

6. This is dear-bought gain. And so is whatever is procured by hurting our neighbour *in his soul*, by ministering, suppose, either directly or indirectly, to his unchastity or intemperance ; which certainly none can do who has any fear of God, or any real desire of pleasing Him. It nearly concerns all those to consider this, who have anything to do with taverns, victualling-houses, opera-houses, play-houses, or any other places of public, fashionable diversion. If these profit the souls of men, you are clear ; your employment is good, and your gain innocent, but if they are either sinful in themselves, or natural inlets to sin of various kinds, then, it is to be feared, you have a sad account to make. O beware, lest God say in that day, 'These have perished in their iniquity, but their blood do I require at thy hands !'

7. These cautions and restrictions being observed, it is the bounden duty of all who are engaged in worldly business to observe that first and great rule of Christian wisdom, with respect to money, 'Gain all you can.' Gain all you can by honest industry. Use all possible diligence in your calling. Lose no time. If you understand yourself, and your relation to God and man, you know you have none to spare. If you understand your particular calling, as you ought, you will have no time that hangs upon your hands. Every business will afford some employment sufficient for every day and every hour. That wherein you are placed, if you follow it in earnest, will leave you no leisure for silly, unprofitable diversions. You have always something better to do, something that will profit you, more or less. And 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.' Do it as soon as possible : no delay ! No putting off from day to day, or from hour to hour ! Never leave anything till to-morrow, which you can do to-day. And do it as well as possible. Do not sleep or yawn over it : put your whole strength to the work.

<sup>1</sup> The words in brackets are omitted from the 1787 and 1825 editions.

Spare no pains. Let nothing be done by halves, or in a slight and careless manner. Let nothing in your business be left undone, if it can be done by labour or patience.

8. Gain all you can, by common sense, by using in your business all the understanding which God has given you. It is amazing to observe, how few do this, how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers. But whatever they do who know not God, this is no rule for you. It is a shame for a Christian not to improve upon *them* in whatever he takes in hand. You should be continually learning, from the experience of others, or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do everything you have to do better to-day than you did yesterday. And see that you practise whatever you learn, that you may make the best of all that is in your hands.

II. 1. Having gained all you can, by honest wisdom, and unwearied diligence, the second rule of Christian prudence is, 'Save all you can.' Do not throw the precious talent into the sea leave that folly to heathen philosophers. Do not throw it away in idle expenses, which is just the same as throwing it into the sea. Expend no part of it merely to gratify the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life.

2. Do not waste any part of so precious a talent, merely in gratifying the desires of the flesh; in procuring the

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8. Wesley exemplified his teaching by his own management of his book-publishing. He was the first to see the great possibilities of cheap literature; and he poured out a flood of pamphlets from his London book-room, by which he made a profit during his later years of upwards of a thousand a year; all of which he gave away. In Sermon LXXXVII, ii. 7, he says, 'Two and forty years ago' (i.e. in 1738), 'having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I had seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a

penny apiece; and afterwards several larger. Some of these had such a sale as I never thought of; and by this means I unawares became rich.'

II. 1. See the quotation from Horace in par. 2. Wesley may have heard the story of how the philosophers Aristippus the Cyrenaic, and Crates of Thebes, the Cynic, threw their money into the sea, exclaiming, 'Hinc abite, malae divitiæ; satius est a me vos demergi,' &c. ('Begone, ye cursed riches; it is better that you should be drowned by me, than I by you').

pleasures of sense, of whatever kind ; particularly, in enlarging the pleasure of tasting. I do not mean, avoid gluttony and drunkenness only — an honest Heathen would condemn these. But there is a regular, reputable kind of sensuality, an elegant epicurism, which does not immediately disorder the stomach, nor (sensibly at least) impair the understanding ; and yet (to mention no other effects of it now) it cannot be maintained without considerable expense. Cut off all this expense ! Despise delicacy and variety, and be content with what plain nature requires.

3. Do not waste any part of so precious a talent, merely in gratifying the desire of the eye, by superfluous or expensive apparel, or by needless ornaments. Waste no part of it in curiously adorning your houses ; in superfluous or expensive furniture ; in costly pictures, painting, gilding, books ; in elegant rather than useful gardens. Let your neighbours, who know nothing better, do this : ‘ let the dead bury their dead.’ But ‘ what is that to thee ? ’ says our Lord : ‘ follow thou Me.’ Are you willing ? Then you are able so to do !

4. Lay out nothing to gratify the pride of life, to gain the admiration or praise of men. This motive of expense is frequently interwoven with one or both of the former. Men are expensive in diet, or apparel, or furniture, not barely to please their appetite, or to gratify their eye, or their imagination, but their vanity too. ‘ So long as thou doest well unto thyself, men will speak good of thee.’ So long as thou art ‘ clothed in purple and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day,’ no doubt many will applaud thy elegance of taste, thy generosity and hospitality. But do not buy their applause so dear. Rather be content with the honour that cometh from God.

5. Who would expend anything in gratifying these desires, if he considered, that to gratify them is to increase them ? Nothing can be more certain than this : daily experience shows, the more they are indulged, they increase the more. Whenever, therefore, you expend anything to please your taste or other senses, you pay so much for sensuality. When you lay out money to please your eye, you give so much for

an increase of curiosity—for a stronger attachment to these pleasures which perish in the using. While you are purchasing anything which men use to applaud, you are purchasing more vanity. Had you not then enough of vanity, sensuality, curiosity, before? Was there need of any addition? And would you pay for it too? What manner of wisdom is this? Would not the literally throwing your money into the sea be a less mischievous folly?

6. And why should you throw away money upon your children, any more than upon yourself, in delicate food, in gay or costly apparel, in superfluities of any kind? Why should you purchase for them more pride or lust, more vanity, or foolish and hurtful desires? They do not want any more; they have enough already; nature has made ample provision for them why should you be at farther expense to increase their temptations and snares, and to pierce them through with many sorrows?

7. Do not leave it to them to throw away. If you have good reason to believe they would waste what is now in your possession, in gratifying, and thereby increasing, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; at the peril of theirs and your own soul, do not set these traps in their way. Do not offer your sons or your daughters unto Belial, any more than unto Moloch. Have pity upon them, and remove out of their way what you may easily foresee would increase their sins, and consequently plunge them deeper into everlasting perdition! How amazing, then, is the infatuation of those parents who think they can never leave their children enough! What! cannot you leave them enough of arrows, firebrands, and death? not enough of foolish and

7. 'Belial'; properly an abstract noun, meaning worthlessness; and so used in the O.T., especially in the phrase 'a son of Belial,' i.e. a worthless fellow. In 1 Cor. vi. 15 we find it used as a personal name for the devil; and Milton describes him in *Paradise Lost*, i. 490:

Belial came last, than whom a spirit more lewd,  
Fell not from heaven, or more gross to love  
Vice for itself.

See also his speech in ii. 109. Moloch is the brutal God to whom children were offered in the fire:

Horrid king, besmeared with blood  
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears.

(*ibid.* i. 392).

hurtful desires? not enough of pride, lust, ambition, vanity? not enough of everlasting burnings? Poor wretch! thou fearest where no fear is. Surely both thou and they, when ye are lifting up your eyes in hell, will have enough both of 'the worm that never dieth,' and of 'the fire that never shall be quenched'!

8. 'What then would you do, if you was in my case? if you had a considerable fortune to leave?' Whether I *would* do it or no, I know what I *ought* to do this will admit of no reasonable question. If I had one child, elder or younger, who knew the value of money, one who, I believed, would put it to the true use, I should think it my absolute, indispensable duty to leave that child the bulk of my fortune, and to the rest just so much as would enable them to live in the manner they had been accustomed to do. 'But what, if all your children were equally ignorant of the true use of money?' I ought then (hard saying! who can hear it?) to give each what would keep him above want, and to bestow all the rest in such a manner as I judged would be most for the glory of God.

III. 1. But let not any man imagine that he has done anything, barely by going thus far, by 'gaining and saving all he can,' if he were to stop here. All this is nothing, if a man go not forward, if he does not point all this at a farther end. Nor, indeed, can a man properly be said to save anything, if he only lays it up. You may as well throw your money into the sea, as bury it in the earth. And you may as well bury it in the earth, as in your chest, or in the Bank of England. Not to use, is effectually to throw it away. If, therefore, you would indeed 'make yourselves friends of the

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III. 1. The Bank of England was founded in 1694. But the business of banking was not developed during the eighteenth century as it has been since; and Wesley failed to see that to put money into a bank is not the same as hoarding it privately; the deposits in a bank are not put into

a safe and kept there; but are for the most part employed in profitable productive activities. Hence one of the best ways of ensuring that one's savings are being used in a way serviceable to the general public is to deposit them in a bank. Probably a thousand pounds put into a

mammon of unrighteousness,' add the third rule to the two preceding. Having, first, gained all you can, and, secondly, saved all you can, then 'give all you can.'

2. In order to see the ground and reason of this, consider, when the Possessor of heaven and earth brought you into being, and placed you in this world, He placed you here, not as a proprietor, but a steward : as such He entrusted you, for a season, with goods of various kinds ; but the sole property of these still rests in Him, nor can ever be alienated from Him. As you yourself are not your own, but His, such is, likewise, all that you enjoy. Such is your soul and your body, not your own, but God's. And so is your substance in particular. And He has told you, in the most clear and express terms, how you are to employ it for Him, in such a manner, that it may be all an holy sacrifice, acceptable through Christ Jesus. And this light, easy service, He hath promised to reward with an eternal weight of glory.

3. The directions which God has given us, touching the use of our worldly substance, may be comprised in the following particulars. If you desire to be a faithful and a wise steward, out of that portion of your Lord's goods which He has for the present lodged in your hands, but with the right of resuming whenever it pleases Him, first, provide things needful for yourself ; food to eat, raiment to put on, whatever nature moderately requires for preserving the body in health and strength. Secondly, provide these for your wife, your children, your servants, or any others who pertain to your household. If, when this is done, there be an overplus left, then 'do good to them that are of the household of faith.' If there be an overplus still, 'as you have opportunity, do good unto all men.' In so doing, you give all you can ; nay, in a sound sense, all you have : for all that is laid out in this

bank would do more good than the same amount given away in charity. Our Lord recognizes the difference between burying money and putting it into a bank, where He represents his lord as rebuking the servant who hid his talent in the earth, 'Where-

fore gavest thou not my money into the bank, and I at my coming should have required it with interest ?'

3. It will be seen that Wesley recognized the first claim of a man's own family for support and comfort.

manner is really given to God. You 'render unto God the things that are God's,' not only by what you give to the poor, but also by that which you expend in providing things needful for yourself and your household.

4. If, then, a doubt should at any time arise in your mind concerning what you are going to expend, either on yourself or any part of your family, you have an easy way to remove it. Calmly and seriously inquire, '(1) In expending this, am I acting according to my character? Am I acting herein, not as a proprietor, but as a steward of my Lord's goods? (2) Am I doing this in obedience to His Word? In what scripture does He require me so to do? (3) Can I offer up this action, this expense, as a sacrifice to God through Jesus Christ? (4) Have I reason to believe, that for this very work I shall have a reward at the resurrection of the just?' You will seldom need anything more to remove any doubt which arises on this head; but, by this four-fold consideration, you will receive clear light as to the way wherein you should go.

5. If any doubt still remain, you may farther examine yourself by prayer, according to those heads of inquiry. Try whether you can say to the Searcher of hearts, your conscience not condemning you, 'Lord, Thou seest I am going to expend this sum on that food, apparel, furniture. And Thou knowest, I act therein with a single eye, as a steward of Thy goods, expending this portion of them thus, in pursuance of the design Thou hadst in entrusting me with them. Thou knowest I do this in obedience to Thy Word, as Thou commandest, and because Thou commandest it. Let this, I beseech Thee, be an holy sacrifice, acceptable through Jesus Christ! And give me a witness in myself, that for this labour of love I shall have a recompense when Thou rewardest every man according to his works.' Now, if your conscience bear you witness in the Holy Ghost, that this prayer is well-pleasing to God, then have you no reason to doubt but that expense is right and good, and such as will never make you ashamed.

6. You see, then, what it is to 'make yourselves friends

of the mammon of unrighteousness,' and by what means you may procure, 'that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' You see the nature and extent of truly Christian prudence, so far as it relates to the use of that great talent, money. Gain all you can, without hurting either yourself or your neighbour, in soul or body, by applying hereto with unintermitted diligence, and with all the understanding which God has given you ;—save all you can, by cutting off every expense which serves only to indulge foolish desire ; to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life ; waste nothing, living or dying, on sin or folly, whether for yourself or your children ;—and then give all you can, or, in other words, give all you have to God. Do not stint yourself, like a Jew rather than a Christian, to this or that proportion. Render unto God, not a tenth, not a third, not half, but all that is God's, be it more or less ; by employing all on yourself, your household, the household of faith, and all mankind, in such a manner, that you may give a good account of your stewardship, when ye can be no longer stewards, in such a manner as the oracles of God direct, both by general and particular precepts ; in such a manner, that whatever ye do may be ' a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour to God,' and that every act may be rewarded in that day, when the Lord cometh with all His saints.

7. Brethren, can we be either wise or faithful stewards unless we thus manage our Lord's goods ? We cannot, as not only the oracles of God, but our own conscience, beareth witness. Then why should we delay ? Why should we confer any longer with flesh and blood, or men of the world ? Our kingdom, our wisdom, is not of this world : heathen custom is nothing to us. We follow no men any farther than they are followers of Christ. Hear ye Him : yea, to-day, while it is called to-day, hear and obey His voice ! At this hour, and from this hour, do His will : fulfil His word, in this and in all things ! I entreat you, in the name of the Lord Jesus, act up to the dignity of your calling ! No more sloth ! Whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with your might ! No

more waste ! Cut off every expense which fashion, caprice, or flesh and blood demand ! No more covetousness ! But employ whatever God has entrusted you with, in doing good, all possible good, in every possible kind and degree, to the household of faith, to all men ! This is no small part of ' the wisdom of the just.' Give all ye have, as well as all ye are, a spiritual sacrifice to Him who withheld not from you His Son, His only Son : so ' laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may attain eternal life ' !

Here end the sermons in Vol. IV of the original edition. In the edition of the *Works* in 1771, Sermons LI, LII, and LIII were added ; but they are not amongst the Standard Sermons. See General Introduction on The Standards of Methodist Doctrine (above, i. 13).



## THE NINE ADDITIONAL SERMONS



## THE CONFERENCE AND THE FIFTY-THREE SERMONS

The Rev. Richard Green wrote an article on 'Our Doctrinal Standards: Fifty-three Sermons or Forty-three,' in the *Methodist Recorder* for December 20, 1894. This was subsequently published as a pamphlet. The matter was discussed by the Committee on Methodist Law, and a case was submitted to Counsel. That case, and the opinion of counsel, were as follows:

### THE CASE

#### *The 'First Four Volumes of Wesley's Sermons'*

In the 'Model Deed,' on the trusts of which nearly all Wesleyan Methodist Chapels are now settled, the following clause appears:

'Provided always that no person or persons whomsoever shall any time hereafter be permitted to preach or expound God's Holy Word or perform any of the usual acts of Religious Worship . . . in the said Chapel . . . who shall maintain promulgate or teach any doctrine or practice contrary to what is contained in certain Notes on the New Testament commonly reputed to be the Notes of the said John Wesley and in the First Four Volumes of Sermons commonly reputed to be written and published by him.'

A question has arisen as to the volumes specified in the phrase 'the First Four Volumes of Sermons,' and the Wesleyan Methodist Conference wishes to obtain a clear determination of the phrase, and to know definitely the number of sermons contained in the first four volumes 'written and published' by John Wesley, mentioned in the proviso of the Chapel Model Deed.

In the earliest 'Model Deed' recommended by the Conference as the form on which the Methodist Preaching-Houses should be settled a clause appears which provides that the persons appointed to the 'Houses' shall preach 'no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes upon the New Testament and four volumes of Sermons.' This deed was printed in 1763 in a pamphlet compiled by John Wesley and known as the *Large Minutes*. Wesley published subsequent editions of the *Large Minutes* in 1770, 1772, 1780, and 1789. In each of these editions a form of a 'Model Deed' is printed, and in each the proviso concerning doctrine stands exactly as it did in the form of deed published in 1763. In 1788, although, as it is said, 'the Con-

ference plan 'for the settlement of Preaching-Houses had been printed in many editions of the *Large Minutes*, yet, at the desire of the Conference, it was republished in the ordinary *Minutes* of the Conference for that year. In this reprint the proviso concerning the Sermons is unaltered. In 1797, six years after the death of Wesley, the Conference issued an important document. It was subsequently recognized, in 1835, as 'the Code of Laws of Methodism,' by Lord Lyndhurst in the Chancery suit of *Warren v. Burton*. In the 'Code' a form of 'Model Deed' is printed. The proviso there appears in a slightly altered form—'Provided that the persons so appointed preach no other doctrines than are contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes upon the New Testament and his four volumes of Sermons by him published.'

Throughout Wesley's life, and immediately after his death, the Methodist Chapels settled on the 'Model Deed' were subject to the proviso which originally appeared in the deed printed in the *Large Minutes* of 1763.

The first question which arises is as to the identification of the 'four volumes of Sermons' mentioned in the model form of deed of 1763. At that time there were in existence four volumes of Sermons which Wesley had published at intervals: the first in 1746, the second in 1748, the third in 1750, and the fourth in 1760. The first, second, and third volumes contain thirty-six sermons, the fourth seven sermons, making a total of forty-three sermons. In the fourth volume together with the seven sermons the following tracts appear: 'Advice to the People called Methodists with regard to Dress,' 'The Duties of Husbands and Wives,' 'Directions to Children,' 'Directions to Servants,' 'Thoughts on Christian Perfection,' and 'Christian Instructions extracted from a late French Author.' With the exception of the 'Advice on Dress' and 'Thoughts on Christian Perfection' these tracts are either abridged or translated by Wesley from other authors, that is, they were 'published' but not all 'written' by him. The 'Sermons' have their separate title-page: 'Sermons on Several Occasions. By John Wesley, M.A.' They occupy 163 pages, and each is prefaced by a page on which the subject of the sermon is printed, as for instance, 'Original Sin. A Sermon on Genesis vi. 5.' None of the tracts is designated a 'sermon.'

Dr. George Osborn, in his *Outlines of Wesleyan Bibliography*, writing of the fourth volume published in 1760, says: 'Although so small a portion of this volume consisted of sermons it was numbered and sold as a fourth volume of Wesley's Sermons' (*Bibliography*, p. 36). Wesley himself considered it a fourth volume of his Sermons. In his *Journal*, under date October 1, 1759, he writes: 'All my leisure time during my stay at Bristol I employed in finishing the fourth volume of Discourses; probably the last I shall publish' (*Standard Journal*, vol. iv. p. 355). It is clear that the 'four volumes of Sermons' mentioned in

the Deed of 1763 must have been those published in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760, because there were no other volumes of Wesley's Sermons at that time in existence. First editions of these Sermons, borrowed from the library of Didsbury College, are sent to Counsel with this Case. In forwarding them it is necessary to say that in an undated copy of a second edition of the volume published in 1750, i.e. the third volume, an additional sermon entitled *Wandering Thoughts* is included.

No question as to the books referred to in the phrase the 'four volumes of Sermons' which appears in the 'Model Deeds' printed in 1763 and 1770 would have arisen had not Wesley determined to publish his prose *Works* in a collected form. The first four of the thirty-two volumes of his *Works* were issued in 1771. They contained the forty-three sermons printed in the first edition and ten additional sermons. The additional sermons are as follows:—

1. The Witness of the Spirit, Discourse II.
2. Sin in Believers.
3. Repentance of Believers.
4. The Great Assize.
5. The Lord our Righteousness.
6. *Wandering Thoughts*.
7. The Scripture Way of Salvation.
8. The Good Steward.
9. The Reformation of Manners.
10. On the Death of Mr. Whitefield.

The fourth volume of the *Works* also contains the tracts 'Advice with regard to Dress,' 'The Duties of Husbands and Wives,' 'Directions to Children,' 'Directions to Servants,' and the beginning of 'An Extract from Mr. Law's Treatise on Christian Perfection' which is continued in the fifth volume. The 'Thoughts on Christian Perfection' and the 'Christian Instructions extracted from a late French Author' are omitted from the fourth volume of the *Works*.

Wesley's design in publishing his *Works* is stated in his Preface. He states that it had been his desire to print in one collection all that he had before published in several tracts; to methodize his publications, placing those together which were on similar subjects and in such order that one might illustrate another. The first four volumes of the *Works* illustrate this method. He alters the order of the 'Discourses' published in the original edition of the four volumes of Sermons, he inserts the discourse on *Wandering Thoughts* and nine others which had been published in separate form in 1758, 1765, 1767, 1768, and 1770. In the first four volumes of the *Works* there are fifty-three sermons.

In 1787-8 Wesley issued an edition of his Sermons in eight volumes. This was the last edition he published. The first four volumes are a

reprint of the original volumes published in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760, the only difference being the inclusion of the sermon on Wandering Thoughts. The order of the 'Discourses,' which had been disturbed in the first four volumes of the *Works*, is restored; the tracts stand as they did in the 1760 volume; and nine of the sermons added in 1771 are omitted. These volumes, published in 1787-8, are entitled '*Sermons on Several Occasions in Four Volumes*, by John Wesley, M.A., etc., the fourth edition.' Uniform with these volumes are four others entitled *Sermons on Several Occasions*, by John Wesley, M.A., etc. The last four volumes contain sermons selected from the *Arminian Magazine*, which was commenced in 1778. It should be noted that the discourse on The Lord our Righteousness, which appears in the first four volumes of the *Works*, is put into the fifth volume of the series of 1787-8.

There can be no doubt that the last edition of the 'four volumes of Sermons' published by Wesley is a reproduction of the first edition with the addition of one sermon, making the number of 'Discourses' forty-four. The Editor of the third edition of Wesley's *Works*, who is principally responsible for the statement that the reference in the proviso of the Chapel Model Deed is to the sermons contained in the first four volumes of *Works* published in 1771, admits the fact of such reproduction. He explains it by saying, 'It is worthy of remark, that when Mr. Wesley published a uniform edition of his Sermons in eight volumes in 1787 and 1788, by some unaccountable inadvertency a copy of an early edition of the doctrinal sermons was placed before the printer.' Whatever ground there may have been for the theory of 'inadvertency,' it is evident that Wesley was satisfied with 'the eight volumes of Sermons.' In his will, dated February 25, 1789, he left, 'As a little token of his love,' a copy of 'the eight volumes of Sermons' to each of those travelling preachers who remained in the Connexion six months after his (Wesley's) decease. It may also be mentioned that in 1799 the Conference resolved that all preachers in 'full connexion' who had not received 'the eight volumes of Sermons' should have them (*Minutes of Conference*, vol. ii, p. 22). From 1787-8 onward the 'eight volumes of Sermons' were well known to the Conference.

Wesley died in 1791, and soon after his death the phrase the 'four volumes of Sermons,' which had appeared in the trust deeds since 1763, began to be altered, first in ordinary speech and then in legal documents.

Dr. Osborn in writing of 'the four volumes of Sermons' says, 'When other sermons, which had been published in the *Arminian Magazine*, were collected into another four volumes, the phrase used in the trust deeds was necessarily altered to "the first four volumes"' (*Bibliography*, p. 36). Several illustrations of the change may be given.

In 1801 Joseph Benson, in his *Apology for the People called Methodists*, speaks of the 'first four volumes of Wesley's Sermons,' which were published with the expressed design of 'submitting the Methodist doctrine to the consideration of mankind.' Benson says that the first volume of Sermons was published in the year 1747, which was a mistake for 1746 (p. 223). In 1810 the phrase 'the first four volumes of Sermons published by the late John Wesley' occurs in the clause concerning doctrines in the trust deed of the Chapel at Lewes in Sussex. In the same year (1810) Crowther, in his *Methodist Manual*, says of Wesley, 'His first four volumes of Sermons, united with his Notes on the New Testament, might be properly termed the test of the doctrines among the Methodists' (p. 58). In 1817 an edition of the *Large Minutes* was published to which are appended two forms of trust deeds for the settlement of Methodist Chapels. Each contains the clause 'Provided always that the person or persons to be appointed by the Conference as aforesaid shall preach no other doctrines than those which are contained in certain Notes upon the New Testament and the first four volumes of Sermons published by the late Mr. John Wesley' (pp. 63, 75). In 1825 the Conference passed a regulation concerning the reading of 'Preachers received on trial.' Before being examined at the District Meeting each candidate had to read with care 'Our standard doctrinal works, viz.: Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament and his first four volumes of Sermons' (*Minutes of Conference*, vol. vi., pp. 64, 65). When the Conference, in 1829, appointed a Committee to devise a more efficient mode for the settlement of Methodist Chapels, and the work of the Committee resulted in the preparation of the present 'Model Deed' in 1832, the phrase, 'the first four volumes of sermons,' which appears in the proviso respecting doctrines in that deed, was well established.

In the opinion of some the phrase 'the first four volumes of Wesley's Sermons' is not clear. Does it indicate the four volumes of the Sermons that are first in order of time, that is the first edition of those published in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760; or does it mean the first four volumes of Wesley's eight-volumed edition published in 1787-8? If the former, should the sermon on Wandering Thoughts be included? It was certainly published in the undated second edition of the 1750 volume, and it appeared before the fourth volume was written. The original title-page, 'Sermons on Several Occasions in Three Volumes,' is used in the second edition of the 1750 volume, and the book was sold at 'the New Room' in Bristol and at 'the Foundery' in London. This undated second edition of Vol. III could not have been issued without Wesley's knowledge, and it was undoubtedly in existence when the proviso concerning doctrines first appeared in the deed of 1763. If the phrase the 'first four volumes of Sermons' indicates the first four volumes of the 1787-8 edition the matter is simplified, for

in the third volume of that edition the sermon on Wandering Thoughts appears and stands in point of order in the place assigned to it in the second undated edition. With the addition of this sermon the contents of the original four volumes of the Sermons and of the first four volumes of the Sermons published in 1787-8 are the same.

The question, however, has been seriously complicated by the action of the Editor of the third edition of Wesley's *Works*. Before the new edition of the *Works* was issued, he prepared, in 1825, an edition of Wesley's Sermons in two volumes. In the 'Advertisement' it is said: 'In the first volume are comprised all the Sermons that were published in four volumes in the duo-decimo size in the year 1771, to which reference is made in the trust deeds of the Methodist Chapels as containing, with Mr. Wesley's Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament, the standard doctrines of the religious Connexion of which that eminent man was the Founder.' The Conference in 1825 thanked the Connexional Editor 'for his new and correct edition of Mr. Wesley's Sermons lately published.'

During the years 1829-31, the third edition of Wesley's *Works* was issued. In its preface, written in 1831, the following paragraph appears:

Speaking of Wesley's edition of his *Works*, published in 1771-4, the Editor says:

'Mr. Wesley's edition of his own *Works* was rendered particularly valuable by an addition that was made to those of his Sermons to which a legal importance was afterwards attached. These *Sermons* were published at different times and were originally comprised in three duo-decimo volumes. The first bears the date of 1746, the second of 1748, and the third of 1750. A fourth was added in the year 1760 containing also some other practical tracts partly original and partly selected, and it was not numbered as connected with the former series. To these Sermons ten others were now added. Some of them had been published as separate pamphlets, having been published on particular occasions. The rest appear to have been written for the express purpose of giving a more complete view of the author's doctrinal system. The entire series is inserted in the first four volumes of the *Works* in the edition of 1771-4, and to these Sermons it is that reference is made in the trust deeds of the Methodist Chapels, as embodying, with his Notes on the New Testament, the doctrines of the Connexion.' (*The Works of the Rev. John Wesley*, vol. i, Preface, p. vii, Third Edition.)

When the Sermons were published in the fifth and sixth volumes of the new edition of *Wesley's Works*, the following notice was prefixed: 'Sermons on Several Occasions. First Series. Consisting of fifty-three discourses published in four volumes in the year 1771, and to which reference is made in the trust deeds of the Methodist Chapels

as constituting, with Mr. Wesley's Notes on the New Testament, the standard doctrines of the Methodist Connexion.'

If the statement of the Editor of the Third Edition of *Wesley's Works* is to be accepted, then the number of the 'Standard' sermons is not forty-three or forty-four, but fifty-three. The statement made a deep impression.

Although the phrase 'the fifty-three Sermons' has come into popular use, the Conference, up to the present, has not committed itself to a declaration concerning the number of 'discourses' contained in 'the first four volumes of Sermons.' The thanks of the Conference of 1825 to the Editor of the two-volume edition of the Sermons for his new 'and correct edition' may be considered to imply an approval of his theory concerning the fifty-three Sermons, but that is open to question. It is true that the number 'fifty-three' was inserted in 1895 in a regulation concerning the examination of Local Preachers passed by the Conference in 1876, but the Conference in 1913 cancelled the words specifying the number. The regulation now stands: 'No candidate shall be fully admitted as a Local Preacher until he has read the first four volumes of John Wesley's Sermons and his Notes on the New Testament' (*Minutes of Conference*, 1913, p. 356).

It seems possible that the Connexional Editor overlooked the distinction between 'Sermons' and 'Works.' The expression 'first four volumes of Sermons' seems to point to 'Sermons' rather than 'Works,' and is more consistent with the four volumes of Sermons published in 1746-60, or the first four volumes of Sermons published in 1787-8, than with the first four volumes of the *Works* published in 1771.

An alteration made in the 'Model Deed' form of 1832 requires to be noted. There the words 'commonly reputed to be' are introduced both in regard to the Notes on the New Testament and in regard to the Sermons. The natural explanation of the use of those new words is that they were suggested by a careful conveyancer with the view of anticipating the difficulty there might be, after the lapse of many years, in proving what particular Notes or volumes of Sermons were written and published by Wesley.

But some may argue that the word 'reputed' must be interpreted by reference to the approval by the Conference in 1825 of the Editor's two-volume edition of the Sermons published in that year. This explanation, however, would not account for the use of the word 'reputed' in reference to the Notes on the New Testament.

In the course of the discussion on the meaning of the phrase 'the first four volumes' of Wesley's Sermons, a question has recently been raised concerning the 'tracts' which are bound up with the fourth volume of 'Discourses,' published by Wesley in 1760, and which also appear in the fourth volume of the 1787-8 edition. It has been suggested that the presence of these 'tracts' in the fourth volume gives

them a value as standards of Methodist doctrine and practice equal to that possessed by the Sermons, and that the 'tracts' must be considered as an integral part of 'the first four volumes of Sermons.' On the other hand, it has been pointed out that these 'tracts' differ from the 'Sermons' not only in form but in their authorship and character, and that they were apparently put into the book to 'make up' the volume.

The opinion of Counsel is requested on the following points :

1. What is the meaning of the phrase : 'The first four volumes of John Wesley's Sermons commonly reputed to be written and published by him.'

2. To which books does the phrase apply—the original volumes published in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760 ; the 'first four volumes' of Wesley's *Works* published in 1771 ; or 'the first four volumes' of the edition of the Sermons published in eight volumes in 1787-8 ?

3. As the original edition of the four volumes of Sermons contains forty-three sermons, the first four volumes of the *Works* fifty-three, and the first four volumes of the 1787-8 edition forty-four, the answer to the second question will carry with it Counsel's opinion concerning the number of sermons that constitute the 'Standard' of Methodist 'doctrine and practice.' If, however, Counsel's opinion is in favour of the original edition containing forty-three sermons, he is requested to say whether the sermon on Wandering Thoughts, which appears in the undated second edition of the original volume of 1750, must be included in the 'four volumes of Sermons' referred to in the proviso contained in 'Model Deeds' from 1763 onward.

4. Are the 'tracts' which appear in the fourth volume of the Sermons to be considered an integral part of the 'Standard' of Methodist doctrine and practice ? The attention of Counsel is directed to the fact that the 'tracts' appended to the 'Sermons' in the fourth volume of Wesley's *Works*, 1771 edition, differ in number and character from those contained in the original and in the 1787-8 editions of the Sermons.

#### THE OPINION

##### *The First Four Volumes of Wesley's Sermons*

In the instructions laid before me in this matter the relevant facts are so clearly stated as to render comparatively simple the task of answering the questions proposed.

1 and 2. To arrive at the meaning of the phrase 'The first four volumes of Sermons written and published by John Wesley,' that phrase must be considered from both a grammatical and a historical point of view. Grammatically, the words are not absolutely clear ;

but, in my opinion, it is reasonably plain that they mean 'the first four volumes, part of a greater number of volumes of Sermons written and published by John Wesley,' and that they do not mean either (i) 'the four volumes of Sermons which were the first to be written and published by John Wesley,' or (ii) 'the first four volumes part of a great number of John Wesley's *Works* which first four volumes in fact contain sermons.' The words 'written and published by John Wesley' should, in my view, be read as descriptive of 'sermons.' Of the sermons written by John Wesley and published in several volumes, the first four volumes in numerical order are in my opinion indicated.

I have omitted for the sake of brevity the words 'commonly reputed to be,' for these words may be regarded as merely the cautious phrase of a skilled conveyancer, and intended to substitute common reputation that the sermons were written and published by John Wesley for strict proof of these facts.

If the phrase is considered historically there cannot, I think, be any real doubt as to its meaning. From 1787-8, the date when the edition of John Wesley's Sermons in eight volumes was first published, the phrase 'the first four volumes of sermons' would have a natural and obvious meaning. The series of eight volumes of Sermons was, as appears from John Wesley's Will, regarded by him as the standard edition; it is easily divisible into two parts; the first four volumes represent, with the addition of the sermon on Wandering Thoughts, the four original volumes published in 1746, 1748, 1750, and 1760; the remaining four volumes contain sermons selected from the *Arminian Magazine*; the whole series was officially known as the eight volumes of Sermons, as sufficiently appears from the *Minutes* of the Conference of 1799, vol. ii, p. 22. Naturally, then, if in any legal document it was desired to refer to the first four volumes of that official series, they would be referred to as 'the first four volumes of Sermons published by John Wesley.' That such was, in fact, the course followed, appears from the form of the trust deeds in the 1817 edition of the *Large Minutes*, and the regulations as to the reading of 'Preachers received on trial' of the 1825 Conference. See the *Minutes*, vol. vi, pp. 64 and 65. As against this view must be set the opinion expressed by the editor of the third edition of John Wesley's *Works* in 1831, but with all respect to his learning his remarks in the preface are in my opinion based on a misconception of the exact interpretation of the phrase 'the first four volumes of Sermons.' He appears to consider that the phrase is equivalent to 'the first four volumes of the collected *Works*,' published in thirty-two volumes, which volumes, in fact, contain or consist of sermons. Merely from the point of view of the language I do not regard this as a possible construction, and when the phrase in the Model Deed of 1832 is viewed in the light of the usage current

at that date, and in that light it should be viewed, it becomes in my opinion even clearer that the reference is to the four volumes of Sermons forming part of the well-known edition of eight volumes of Sermons, and not to the four volumes of Sermons forming part of the edition of the collected *Works*.

In my view, then, to sum up, the phrase in the Model Deed applies to the first four volumes of Wesley's Sermons published in eight volumes in 1787-8.

3. If I am right in my answers to questions 1 and 2, it follows that the total number of Sermons constituting the standard of Methodist doctrine and practice is forty-four, and in that number is included the sermon on Wandering Thoughts.

4. In my opinion the tracts appearing at the end of the fourth volume of the Sermons do not form an integral part of Methodist doctrine and practice, and are not covered by the phrase 'the first four volumes of Sermons.' Those words are compendious in form. As naturally expanded they would read 'the sermons contained in the first four volumes of Sermons,' and though tracts which are not sermons at all may be included in one of the volumes which contains sermons and is published as part of the Sermons, those tracts cannot in my opinion be regarded as sermons, though they are included in the covers of the book. The volume, *qua* volume of Sermons, is complete without the tracts, and in my opinion only the sermons in the volume are within the ambit of the phrase in the Model Deed.

4, New Court, Lincoln's Inn.  
February 2, 1914.

OWEN THOMPSON.

The Committee unanimously passed the following Resolutions:

(1) The Committee resolves to report to the Conference the stages taken by the Committee in its inquiry, and to advise the Conference to accept Counsel's opinion, and to place on record that the phrase 'the first four volumes of John Wesley's Sermons' is to be interpreted in accordance with that opinion.

(2) The Report of the Committee to Conference shall contain both the 'Historical Statement' of the Sub-Committee and the opinion of Counsel, and we recommend that these, together with the Conference decision on the question, shall be fully printed in the *Minutes*.

The Conference received this Report, and placed on record that 'the phrase "the first four volumes" of John Wesley's *Sermons* is to be interpreted in accordance with counsel's opinion, viz.: The phrase in the Model Deed applies to the first four volumes of Wesley's *Sermons*, published in eight volumes in 1787-8; and the total number of sermons is forty-four.'

# SERMON XLV

## THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

### DISCOURSE II

THIS sermon was written at Newry on April 4, 1767, and published separately by Pine of Bristol in the same year. It appeared in the *Works* of 1771 as No. XI of the sermons; but it is not contained in the edition of the sermons of 1787-8. Its purpose was (1) to show that Wesley had not changed his views on this subject since the publication of the previous sermon in 1746; ii. 3: 'After twenty years' further consideration I see no cause to retract any part of this'; (2) to confirm the doctrine by the experience of the multitudes who had been converted through the preaching of the Methodists during these years; (3) to answer some of the objections which had been raised against it. I find no record of its having been preached; it is rather a treatise than a sermon.

Some of the most important attacks on Wesley's teaching between 1746 and 1767 were as follows:

*The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, published by Bishop Lavington of Exeter in 1749; with a third part in 1751.

*A Serious Address to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley* in relation to the principal doctrine advanced and maintained by him and his assistants, by John Parkhurst. This doctrine is that of the witness of the Spirit. This was published in 1753.

*Original Letters between the Rev. Mr. John Wesley and Mr. Richard Tompson* respecting the doctrine of Assurance, published in 1760, but written in 1755-6.

*An Apology for the Clergy*, published in 1755.

*A Dissertation on Enthusiasm*, by Thomas Green, Vicar of Wymeswould, published in 1755.

*The History of Modern Enthusiasm*, by the Rev. Theophilus Evans, published 1756.

*The Use and Extent of Reason in Matters of Religion*, by Thomas Griffith, 1756.

*Methodism Displayed and Enthusiasm Detected*, 1757.

Various pamphlets by the Rev. Dr. Free, 1758-9.

*Methodism Examined*, by the Rev. John Downes, 1759.

*A Friendly and Compassionate Address to Methodists*, by Alexander Jephson, 1760.

*Principles and Practices of the Methodists, Considered*, by the Rev. John Green, Dean of Lincoln, 1760.

*Montanus Redivivus*, by the Rev. James Clark, 1760.

Sermons by Dr. Hitchcock and the Rev. John Allen, 1761.

*Caution against Religious Delusion*, by William Backhouse, 1763.

*Four Charges to the Clergy*, by Thomas Rutherford, 1763.

*The Doctrine of Grace*, by Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, 1763.

Besides these there were numberless pamphlets, letters to the papers, ribald poems and plays, almost all of them ridiculing the claim of the Methodists to supernatural light and inspiration. Such objections as have any show of reason Wesley deals with in the fourth section of this sermon; but a large part of these alleged criticisms and refutations of his teaching is mere vulgar abuse and wilful misunderstanding.

Dr. Beet says, in the *London Quarterly Review* for January 1921 :

Wesley's first sermon on the Witness of the Spirit, written apparently about A.D. 1747, is unsatisfactory. It does not notice that Paul's own cry, Abba, Father, which he has just asserted to be prompted by the Spirit of God, is itself a twofold witness that the writer and his readers are children of God. Nor does he notice the light shed on this testimony by the word *witness*, in Acts xv. 8: 'God bare them witness, by giving them the Holy Spirit, even as to us.' He does not even mention the all-important parallel in Gal. iv. 6, 7, which throws great light on Rom. viii. 15, 16.

The second sermon gives us John Wesley's mature thought, twenty years later. In it, Gal. iv. 6, 7 is quoted or mentioned three times; and Rom. viii. 16 is viewed in its relation to the preceding verses. But that this human cry, prompted by the Spirit of God, is the double and decisive testimony of two witnesses that Paul and his readers are in very truth children of God, is not clearly stated. In these sermons, the writer has also misunderstood the Witness of our own spirit. But in Sermon XI, for which the writer appropriately takes another text, this last important topic is profitably discussed.

The above defects need not surprise us. Very few men are equally effective in action and as leaders of thought. But John Wesley, the father of the Methodist Revival, has rendered immense service to English theology by calling conspicuous attention to important elements, previously overlooked, in Christ's message to men. The real embodiment of Methodist theology is the Methodist Hymn-Book, and especially Charles Wesley's hymns. Thus the active labour of one brother found a needful supplement in the other's quiet thought. This last has permanent embodiment in the most useful form possible, in the hymns which appeal to the intelligence and the heart of all who read the English language.

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*—ROM. viii. 16.

I. 1. NONE who believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God can doubt the importance of such a truth as this—a truth revealed therein, not once only, not obscurely, not incidentally, but frequently, and that in express terms, but solemnly and of set purpose, as denoting one of the peculiar privileges of the children of God.

2. And it is the more necessary to explain and defend this truth, because there is a danger on the right hand and on the left. If we deny it, there is a danger lest our religion degenerate into mere formality; lest, having ‘a form of godliness,’ we neglect, if not ‘deny, the power of it.’ If we allow it, but do not understand what we allow, we are liable to run into all the wildness of enthusiasm. It is therefore needful, in the highest degree, to guard those who fear God from both these dangers, by a scriptural and rational illustration and confirmation of this momentous truth.

3. It may seem, something of this kind is the more needful because so little has been wrote on the subject with any clearness; unless some discourses on the wrong side of the question, which explain it quite away. And it cannot be doubted, but these were occasioned, at least in a great measure, by the crude, unscriptural, irrational explication of others, who ‘knew not what they spake, nor whereof they affirmed.’

4. It more nearly concerns the Methodists, so called, clearly to understand, explain, and defend this doctrine, because it is one grand part of the testimony which God has given them to

I. Par. 4. Archdeacon Hutton, in *Cambridge Hist. of English Literature*, x. 363, says, ‘The age of Wesley and Whitefield introduced what may be called a new romanticism in religion, just as the Lake School, half a century later, may be said to have destroyed the classic tradition of the older poetry.’ Wordsworth did this by revealing to men the spiritual in Nature:

A sense sublime  
Of something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
And the round ocean and the living air,  
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.  
A motion and a spirit that impels  
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
And rolls through all things.

*Tintern Abbey.*

So Wesley taught that orthodox opinions and correct morality had no real value except in so far as they

bear to all mankind. It is by His peculiar blessing upon them in searching the Scriptures, confirmed by the experience of His children, that this great evangelical truth has been recovered, which had been for many years wellnigh lost and forgotten.

II. 1. But what is the witness of the Spirit? The original word, *μαρτυρία*, may be rendered either (as it is in several places) *the witness*, or less ambiguously, *the testimony* or *the record*: so it is rendered in our translation (1 John v. 11), 'This is the record,' the testimony, the sum of what God testifies in all the inspired writings, 'that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.' The testimony now under consideration is given by the Spirit of God to and with our spirit: He is the Person testifying. What He testifies to us is, 'that we are the children of God.' The immediate result of this testimony is, 'the fruit of the Spirit'; namely, 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness'; and without these, the testimony itself cannot continue. For it is inevitably destroyed, not only by the commission of any outward sin, or the omission of known duty, but by giving way to any inward sin; in a word, by whatever grieves the Holy Spirit of God.

2. I observed many years ago, 'It is hard to find words

were the expression of the indwelling Spirit of God; and he rightly held that this was the essential part of the Methodist doctrine. It was no more a new teaching than was Wordsworth's; it was a recovery of the point of view of St. Paul and of the fathers of the English Church, as Wordsworth's was a recovery of the point of view of Plato. To quote Archdeacon Hutton again: 'The Methodist movement was a reaction against the calmness with which English theologians had accepted and suppressed many of the vital elements of the Christian creed.

A new theology, or at least a revival of the old, was needed, which should base its appeal on

the verities of the Christian life.'

II. 1. 'Witness' is the best rendering, and has been adopted in 1 John v. 11 by the R.V. It is less abstract than 'testimony,' and conveys the idea of personal evidence better than 'record.'

Wesley properly insists on the continuity of the witness. It is not a witness given once for all at the moment of conversion, and thenceforward existing in the memory only; it is a continuous experience, and therefore may be interrupted by wilful sin, and must be recovered by repentance.

2. See Sermon X, i. 7 and note. It was published in 1746; this sermon in 1767.

in the language of men, to explain the deep things of God. Indeed, there are none that will adequately express what the Spirit of God works in His children. But perhaps one might say (desiring any who are taught of God, to correct, soften, or strengthen the expression), by the testimony of the Spirit, I mean, an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God ; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me ; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.'

3. After twenty years' further consideration, I see no cause to retract any part of this. Neither do I conceive how any of these expressions may be altered, so as to make them more intelligible. I can only add, that if any of the children of God will point out any other expressions which are more clear, or more agreeable to the Word of God, I will readily lay these aside.

4. Meantime let it be observed, I do not mean hereby, that the Spirit of God testifies this by any outward voice ; no, nor always by an inward voice, although He may do this sometimes. Neither do I suppose, that He always applies to the heart (though He often may) one or more texts of Scripture. But He so works upon the soul by His immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is a sweet calm, the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled, that all his ' iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered.'

5. Now what is the matter of dispute concerning this ? Not whether there be a witness or testimony of the Spirit. Not whether the Spirit does testify with our spirit that we are the children of God. None can deny this, without flatly contradicting the Scriptures, and charging a lie upon the God of truth. Therefore, that there is a testimony of the Spirit is acknowledged by all parties.

6. Neither is it questioned, whether there is an *indirect* witness, or testimony, that we are the children of God. This is nearly, if not exactly, the same with the testimony of a

good conscience towards God ; and is the result of reason, or reflection of what we feel in our own souls. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the Word of God, and partly from our own experience. The Word of God says, every one who has the fruit of the Spirit is a child of God, experience, or inward consciousness, tells me, that I have the fruit of the Spirit, and hence I rationally conclude, ' Therefore I am a child of God.' This is likewise allowed on all hands, and so is no matter of controversy.

7. Nor do we assert, that there can be any real testimony of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit. We assert, on the contrary, that the fruit of the Spirit immediately springs from this testimony ; not always indeed in the same degree, even when the testimony is first given ; and much less afterwards. Neither joy nor peace is always at one stay ; no, nor love, as neither is the testimony itself always equally strong and clear.

8. But the point in question is, whether there be any *direct* testimony of the Spirit at all ; whether there be any other testimony of the Spirit, than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit.

III. 1. I believe there is ; because that is the plain, natural meaning of the text, ' The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' It is manifest, here are two witnesses mentioned, who together testify the same thing ; the Spirit of God, and our own spirit. The late Bishop of London, in his sermon on this text, seems aston-

7. The qualification in the last sentence of this paragraph is important. Already in *Minutes*, August 2, 1745, Wesley had said, ' We allow there may be infinite degrees in seeing God.' In his reply to Dr. Rutherford (1763) he says of the consciousness of being in the favour of God, ' It is frequently weakened, nay, perhaps interrupted, by returns of doubt or fear.'

III. 1. ' The late Bishop of Lon-

don,' Edmund Gibson, who had died in 1748 at the age of seventy-nine. Southey says of him, ' He was of a mild and conciliating temper ; a distinguished antiquary, a sound scholar, equally frugal and beneficent.' Wesley always speaks of him with respect ; in Sermon CXXXII, preached at the laying of the foundation stone of City Road, on April 21, 1777, he refers to him as ' a great man, who, I trust, is

ished that any one can doubt of this, which appears upon the very face of the words. Now, 'The testimony of our own spirit,' says the Bishop, 'is one, which is the consciousness of our own sincerity', or, to express the same thing a little more clearly, the consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. When our spirit is conscious of this, of love, joy, peace, long-

now in a better world'; and in Sermon LXVI he calls him 'a person of considerable learning, as well as eminence in the Church.' He had been Precentor of Chichester, Rector of Lambeth, Archdeacon of Surrey, and Bishop of Lincoln, and was translated to London in 1723. He ordained Charles Wesley to the priesthood in 1735. John and Charles Wesley waited on him on October 20, 1738, to answer complaints that had been made against them on the ground that they preached 'an absolute assurance of salvation.' Charles in his diary, October 21 (he is a day out in his date), says, 'Some of his words were, "If by assurance you mean an inward persuasion, whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God, and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God, I don't see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance." "This," we answered, "is what we contend for."' If they did say so, it was not altogether true. The Bishop admits nothing but what is described both in this and the preceding sermon as 'the witness of our own Spirit.' However, it is clear that his attitude was kindly; though he did not approve of the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit; and in the next year in his Pastoral Letter he attacked Whitefield and the Wesleys on the usual ground that their teaching encouraged Enthusiasm—i.e. extravagant pretensions

to divine inspiration and enlightenment; though his language is always moderate and free from the vulgar abuse which many of the opponents of the early Methodists employed. Whitefield answered him with all due respect for his age and office, but with firmness and success. In 1740 John Wesley had a conversation with the Bishop at Whitehall. See Introduction to Sermon XXXV. In 1744 was published anonymously *Observations upon the Conduct and Behaviour of a certain Sect usually distinguished by the name of Methodists*. This was in the main an attack on Whitefield, and was answered by him in two letters, addressed to the Bishop of London and the other bishops concerned in its publication. It was supposed to have been written by Gibson; Tyerman says it 'was written by Dr. Gibson'; he himself neither denied nor admitted the authorship. I am inclined to think that he was cognizant of its publication; but I doubt if he actually wrote it. In May 1747 the Rev. R. T. Bateman, the Rector of St. Bartholomew the Great, offered his pulpit to John Wesley. The churchwardens complained to Bishop Gibson; but he replied, 'What would you have me do? I have no right to hinder him. Mr. Wesley is a clergyman, regularly ordained, and under no ecclesiastical censure.' In his charge to his clergy, however, in this same year, he attacked Wesley, Whitefield, and the Moravians; and Wesley answered

suffering, gentleness, goodness, it easily infers from these premisses, that we are the children of God.

2. It is true, that great man supposes the other witness to be, 'the consciousness of our own good works.' This, he affirms, is the testimony of God's Spirit. But this is included in the testimony of our own spirit, yea, and in sincerity, even according to the common sense of the word. So the Apostle, 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world'; where, it is plain, sincerity refers to our words and actions at least as much as to our inward dispositions. So that this is not another witness, but the very same that he mentioned before; the consciousness of our good works being only one branch of the consciousness of our sincerity. Consequently here is only one witness still. If, therefore, the text speaks of two witnesses, one of these is not the consciousness of our good works, neither of our sincerity, all this being manifestly contained in the testimony of our spirit.

3. What then is the other witness? This might easily be learned, if the text itself were not sufficiently clear, from the verse immediately preceding: 'Ye have received, not the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.' It follows, 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.'

4. This is farther explained by the parallel text (Gal. iv. 6), 'Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of

him in a letter in which he shows the Bishop his errors, but always respectfully. His final appeal beginning, 'My lord, the time is short. I am past the noon of life, and my remaining years flee away as a shadow. Your lordship is old and full of days, having passed the usual age of man. It cannot, therefore, be long before we shall both drop this house of earth and stand naked before God,' is remarkably impressive. Henry Moore testifies that it had a great effect on the Bishop; indeed, that

he was currently reported to have turned Methodist in consequence. At all events, the old man died in September of the next year. Nearly forty years after, in 1786, Wesley, in his *Life of Fletcher*, quotes some words of his on the sanctity of the Sabbath.

I can find no other reference to the sermon mentioned in this paragraph; I should suppose it was preached some time between 1746 and his death.

His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.' Is not this something *immediate* and *direct*, not the result of reflection or argumentation? Does not this Spirit cry, 'Abba, Father,' in our hearts, the moment it is given, antecedently to any reflection upon our sincerity, yea, to any reasoning whatsoever? And is not this the plain, natural sense of the words, which strikes any one as soon as he hears them? All these texts then, in their most obvious meaning, describe a direct testimony of the Spirit.

5. That the testimony of the Spirit of God must, in the very nature of things, be antecedent to the testimony of our own spirit, may appear from this single consideration we must be holy in heart and life before we can be conscious that we are so. But we must love God before we can be holy at all, this being the root of all holiness. Now, we cannot love God, till we know He loves us: 'We love Him, because He first loved us', and we cannot know His love to us, till His Spirit witnesses it to our spirit. Till then we cannot believe it, we cannot say, 'The life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.'

Then, only then we feel  
Our interest in His blood,  
And cry, with joy unspeakable,  
Thou art my Lord, my God!

Since, therefore, the testimony of His Spirit must precede the love of God, and all holiness, of consequence it must precede our consciousness thereof.

6. And here properly comes in, to confirm this scriptural doctrine, the experience of the children of God; the expe-

5. Wesley still confuses adoption with regeneration; in fact, they are simultaneous. It is not the witness to our adoption that makes us holy, but the new life imparted in regeneration. It is impossible to say which comes first, the consciousness of sonship, or the consciousness of the new life. In any case the order is logical, not temporal.

The quotation is the second quatrain in verse 2 from Hymn xxvii in the *Hymns of Praise and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father*, 1746. It begins 'Spirit of faith, come down,' and is No. 346 in the Methodist Hymn-Book.

6. The quotation is the last couplet in verse 9 from Hymn cxcvi in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1749. It

rience not of two or three, not of a few, but of a great multitude which no man can number. It has been confirmed, both in this and in all ages, by 'a cloud' of living and dying 'witnesses.' It is confirmed by *your* experience and *mine*. The Spirit itself bore witness to my spirit, that I was a child of God, gave me an evidence hereof; and I immediately cried, 'Abba, Father!' And this I did (and so did you) before I reflected on, or was conscious of, any fruit of the Spirit. It was from this testimony received, that love, joy, peace, and the whole fruit of the Spirit flowed. First, I heard,

Thy sins are forgiven! Accepted thou art!—  
I listen'd, and heaven sprung up in my heart.

7. But this is confirmed, not only by the experience of the children of God—thousands of whom can declare that they never did know themselves to be in the favour of God till it was directly witnessed to them by His Spirit—but by all those who are convinced of sin, who feel the wrath of God abiding on them. These cannot be satisfied with anything less than a direct testimony from His Spirit—that He is 'merciful to their unrighteousness, and remembers their sins and iniquities no more.' Tell any of these, 'You are to know you are a child, by reflecting on what He has wrought in you, on your love, joy, and peace', and will he not immediately reply, 'By all this I know I am a child of the devil? I have no more love to God than the devil has; my carnal mind is enmity against God. I have no joy in the Holy Ghost, my soul is sorrowful even unto death. I have no peace; my heart is a troubled

begins 'Ye neighbours and friends of Jesus, draw near.' It is headed, 'After Preaching to the Newcastle Colliers.' In Charles Wesley's diary, November 30, 1746, he says, 'I went out into the streets of Newcastle, and called the poor, the lame, the halt, the blind, with that precious promise "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." They had no feeling of the frost while the love of Christ warmed their hearts.'

The last line in the original is 'They listen, and heaven springs up in their heart.' It is the fourth verse in Hymn 284 in the Methodist Hymn-Book, where the original reading is retained.

7. As in the previous sermon, Wesley confuses the witness of the Spirit to our adoption with the inference from it that our sins are forgiven. The conclusion of the next paragraph is therefore not fair. It is

sea ; I am all storm and tempest.' And which way can these souls possibly be comforted, but by a divine testimony (not that they are good, or sincere, or conformable to the Scripture in heart and life, but) that God *justifieth the ungodly*?—him that, till the moment he is justified, is all ungodly, void of all true holiness, 'him that worketh not,' that worketh nothing that is truly good, till he is conscious that he is accepted, not for any 'works of righteousness which he hath done,' but by the mere, free mercy of God ; wholly and solely for what the Son of God hath done and suffered for him. And can it be any otherwise, if 'a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law' ? If so, what inward or outward goodness can he be conscious of antecedent to his justification ? Nay, is not the having nothing to pay, that is, the being conscious that 'there dwelleth in us no good thing,' neither inward nor outward goodness, essentially, indispensably necessary, before we can be 'justified freely, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ' ? Was ever any man justified since his coming into the world, or can any man ever be justified, till he is brought to that point,—

I give up every plea beside,—  
Lord, I am damn'd ; but Thou hast died ?

8. Every one, therefore, who denies the existence of such a testimony, does in effect deny justification by faith. It follows, that either he never experienced this, either he never was justified, or that he has forgotten, as St. Peter speaks, *τοῦ καθαρισμοῦ τῶν πάλαι αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτιῶν*, *the purification from his*

perfectly possible for one who affirms the doctrine of justification by faith to question whether the Spirit directly bears witness to forgiveness. Dr. Pope (iii. 116) says, 'The Spirit is not expressly said to assure of pardon. That is rather implied and involved than stated.'

The quotation is the last couplet from verse 12 in the hymn in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, headed 'Galatians iii. 22' and beginning

'Jesu, the sinner's Friend, to Thee.' It is Hymn 307 in the Methodist Hymn-Book ; but the last line has been politely weakened to 'Lord, I am lost ; but Thou hast died !'

8. It seems probable that the passage quoted (2 Pet. i. 9) refers to baptism, and to pre-baptismal sins. But its application to the regeneration of which baptism is the sign and seal is quite justifiable.

*former sins* ; the experience he then had himself ; the manner wherein God wrought in his own soul, when his former sins were blotted out.

9. And the experience even of the children of the world here confirms that of the children of God. Many of these have a desire to please God : some of them take much pains to please Him : but do they not, one and all, count it the highest absurdity for any to talk of *knowing* his sins are forgiven ? Which of *them* even pretends to any such thing ? And yet many of them are conscious of their own sincerity. Many of them undoubtedly have, in a degree, the testimony of their own spirit, a consciousness of their own uprightness. But this brings them no consciousness that they are forgiven, no knowledge that they are the children of God. Yea, the more sincere they are, the more uneasy they generally are, for want of knowing it, plainly showing that this cannot be known in a satisfactory manner, by the bare testimony of our own spirit, without God's directly testifying that we are His children.

IV But abundance of objections have been made to this ; the chief of which it may be well to consider.

1. It is objected, first, 'Experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine which is not founded on Scripture.' This is undoubtedly true, and it is an important truth : but it does not affect the present question ; for it has been shown, that this doctrine is founded on Scripture : therefore experience is properly alleged to confirm it.

2. 'But madmen, French prophets, and enthusiasts of every kind, have imagined they experienced this witness.'

IV. 2. The French prophets originated in the time of the dragonades by which it was sought to exterminate the Protestants in the Cevennes after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes towards the close of the seventeenth century. These men and women were driven by the cruel persecutions to which they were subjected into an abnormal state of

exalted feeling, which manifested itself in various forms of hysteria, such as violent convulsions, cataleptic trances, and incoherent prophesyings, all of which were attributed to divine inspiration. Many of the refugees came to London, where in the first decade of the eighteenth century they formed a society, and began to seek proselytes. In 1710

They have so ; and perhaps not a few of them did, although they did not retain it long : but if they did not, this is no proof at all that others have not experienced it ; as a mad-man's imagining himself a king, does not prove that there are no *real* kings.

'Nay, many who pleaded strongly for this, have utterly decried the Bible.' Perhaps so, but this was no necessary consequence : thousands plead for it who have the highest esteem for the Bible.

'Yea, but many have fatally deceived themselves hereby, and got above all conviction.' And yet a scriptural doctrine is no worse, though men abuse it to their own destruction.

3. 'But I lay it down as an undoubted truth, the fruit of the Spirit is the witness of the Spirit.' Not undoubted ;

we hear of them holding an open-air meeting in Wiltshire at a place which was long called 'The Prophets' Barrows' in consequence. Charles Wesley met with one of them at Wycombe in 1738, and passed a bad night sleeping, or rather, trying to sleep, with him. They tried to win over the Moravians, but Count Zinzendorf refused to have anything to do with them ; and when the Methodist societies were formed they at once sought to win converts among them, and gave Wesley a good deal of trouble both in London and in Bristol. John Wesley interviewed one of them on January 28, 1739 ; but it was by no means clear to him that she spoke by the Spirit of God. 'The motion,' he thought, 'might be either hysterical or artificial.' Six months later he warned his Bristol societies against them. In June of the same year a certain Miss Lavington, who was a famous French prophetess, succeeded in winning over Bray, and Bowers, and many other members of the London Society ; she came to a meeting on June 12, 'flew upon us like a tigress,' says Charles Wesley ; told them that

he was a fool, a blockhead, a blind leader of the blind ; 'she roared outrageously ; said it was the lion in her.' In fine, things got to such a pass that Charles cried out, 'Who is on God's side ? Who for the old Prophets rather than the new ? Let them follow me.' The great majority followed him into the preaching-room ; and the next day, John having returned from Bristol, they agreed to disown the prophetess. In 1786 John met with something of the same sort in Wales amongst the Jumpers ; they prayed all together, screamed as loud as they could, used improper and even indecent language in prayer, became as stiff as corpses, and then jumped up, crying, 'Glory ! Glory !' perhaps twenty times together ; 'just so,' says he, 'do the French Prophets.'

In the two latter paragraphs Wesley doubtless had in mind George Bell and Thomas Maxfield, whose enthusiastic pretensions to divine illumination had almost broken up the London Society in 1762, so that in 1766 the number had fallen from 2,800 to 2,200.

thousands doubt of, yea, flatly deny it : but let that pass. ' If this witness be sufficient, there is no need of any other. But it is sufficient, unless in one of these cases : 1. The *total absence* of the fruit of the Spirit.' And this is the case, when the direct witness is first given. 2. ' The *not perceiving it.* But to contend for it in this case, is to contend for being in the favour of God, and not knowing it.' True , not knowing it at that time any otherwise than by the testimony which is given for that end. And this we do contend for , we contend that the direct witness may shine clear, even while the indirect one is under a cloud.

4. It is objected, secondly, " The design of the witness contended for is, to prove that the profession we make is genuine. But it does not prove this.' I answer, the proving this is not the design of it. It is antecedent to our making any profession at all, but that of being lost, undone, guilty, helpless sinners. It is designed to assure those to whom it is given, that they are children of God , that they are ' justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' And this does not suppose that their preceding thoughts, words, and actions, are conformable to the rule of Scripture , it supposes quite the reverse ; namely, that they are sinners all over ; sinners both in heart and life. Were it otherwise, God would *justify the godly* , and *their own works* would be *counted to them for righteousness*. And I cannot but fear that a supposition of our being justified by works is at the root of all these objections ; for, whoever cordially believes that God *imputes* to all that are justified *righteousness without works*, will find no difficulty in allowing the witness of His Spirit, preceding the fruit of it.

5. It is objected, thirdly, ' One Evangelist says, " Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him." The other Evangelist calls the same thing " good gifts" ; abundantly demonstrating that the Spirit's way of bearing witness is by giving good gifts.' Nay, here is nothing at all about *bearing witness*, either in the one text or the other. Therefore till this demonstration is better demonstrated, I let it stand as it is.

6. It is objected, fourthly, 'The Scripture says, "The tree is known by its fruits. Prove all things. Try the spirits. Examine yourselves."' Most true. Therefore, let every man who believes he 'hath the witness in himself,' try whether it be of God: if the fruit follow, it is, otherwise it is not. For certainly 'the tree is known by its fruit': hereby we *prove* if it be 'of God.' 'But the direct witness is never referred to in the book of God.' Not as standing alone; not as a single witness, but as connected with the other, as giving a *joint testimony*, testifying *with our spirit*, that we are children of God. And who is able to prove, that it is not *thus* referred to in this very scripture? 'Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you?' It is by no means clear, that they did not know this by a *direct* as well as a *remote* witness. How is it proved, that they did not know it, first, by an inward consciousness; and then, by love, joy, and peace?'

7. 'But the testimony arising from the internal and external change is constantly referred to in the Bible.' It is so and we constantly refer thereto, to confirm the testimony of the Spirit.

'Nay, all the marks *you* have given, whereby to distinguish the operations of God's Spirit from delusion, refer to the change wrought in us and upon us.' This, likewise, is undoubtedly true.

8. It is objected, fifthly, that 'the direct witness of the Spirit does not secure us from the greatest delusion. And is that a witness fit to be trusted, whose testimony cannot be depended on? that is forced to fly to something else, to

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6. 'This very scripture' is 2 Cor. xiii. 5: 'Do you not know yourselves thoroughly' (yourselves being the object, not the subject, of 'know') 'that Jesus Christ is in you?' The thorough knowledge of themselves was sufficient proof of the indwelling of Christ in their hearts; in other words, it was a matter of immediate

personal experience; and this could only be by the operation of the Holy Spirit. So that Wesley's exegesis is quite sound.

8. This is the only one of these objections that has anything in it: that it is possible to mistake for the witness of the Spirit some exaltation of mind or feeling that is purely

prove what it asserts?' I answer: To secure us from all delusion, God gives us two witnesses that we are His children. And this they testify conjointly. Therefore, 'what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' And while they are joined, we cannot be deluded: their testimony can be depended on. They are fit to be trusted in the highest degree, and need nothing else to prove what they assert.

'Nay, the direct witness only asserts, but does not prove anything.' By two witnesses shall every word be established. And when the Spirit witnesses with our spirit, as God designs it to do, then it fully proves that we are children of God.

9. It is objected, sixthly. 'You own the change wrought is a sufficient testimony, unless in the case of severe trials, such as that of our Saviour upon the cross; but none of us can be tried in that manner.' But you or I may be tried in such a manner, and so may any other child of God, that it will be impossible for us to keep our filial confidence in God without the direct witness of His Spirit.

10. It is objected, lastly, 'The greatest contenders for it are some of the proudest and most uncharitable of men.' Perhaps some of the *hottest* contenders for it are both proud and uncharitable, but many of the *firmest* contenders for it are eminently meek and lowly in heart, and, indeed, in all other respects also,

True followers of their lamb-like Lord.

natural, or even hallucinatory. Wesley's answer is the only one that can be given; though it is not consistent with what he has said in iii. 5 above. He is right here in claiming that the two witnesses are given conjointly, not one after the other.

10. The quotation is obviously from some hymn of Charles Wesley's, though I have not been able to find it in this exact form. But it appears in some form in almost all his poems on the deaths of his friends. Of Robert Jones he says: 'After the Lamb he still rejoiced to go,' and describes him as 'A faithful

follower of the bleeding Lamb.' Mrs. Grace Bowen (1755) is a 'Meek follower of the patient Lamb'; Mrs. Mercy Thornton (1757) is addressed as 'Close follower of the Lamb'; Mrs. Mary Naylor (1757) is 'A follower of the patient Lamb'; in the hymn on Rev. James Hervey (1758) we are exhorted to 'Follow this follower of the Lamb'; in that on the death of Mr. John Matthews (1764) he prays that we may live 'As followers of the silent Lamb'; the last line of his verses on his mother's death is 'And lamb-like as her Lord she died.'

The preceding objections are the most considerable that I have heard, and I believe contain the strength of the cause. Yet I apprehend whoever calmly and impartially considers those objections and the answers together, will easily see that they do not destroy, no, nor weaken, the evidence of that great truth, that the Spirit of God does *directly*, as well as *indirectly*, testify that we are children of God.

V 1. The sum of all is this the testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the souls of believers, whereby the Spirit of God directly testifies to their spirit, that they are children of God. And it is not questioned, whether there is a testimony of the Spirit, but whether there is any *direct* testimony, whether there is any other than that which arises from a consciousness of the fruit of the Spirit. We believe there is, because this is the plain natural meaning of the text, illustrated both by the preceding words, and by the parallel passage in the Epistle to the Galatians, because, in the nature of the thing, the testimony must precede the fruit which springs from it; and because this plain meaning of the Word of God is confirmed by the experience of innumerable children of God; yea, and by the experience of all who are convinced of sin, who can never rest till they have a direct witness; and even of the children of the world, who, not having the witness in themselves, one and all declare, none can *know* his sins forgiven.

2. And whereas it is objected, that experience is not sufficient to prove a doctrine unsupported by Scripture; that madmen and enthusiasts of every kind have imagined such a witness; that the design of that witness is to prove our profession genuine, which design it does not answer; that the Scripture says, 'The tree is known by its fruit,' 'examine yourselves, prove your own selves,' and, meantime, the direct witness is never referred to in all the book of God; that it does not secure us from the greatest delusions; and, lastly, that the change wrought in us is a sufficient testimony, unless in such trials as Christ alone suffered,—we answer, 1. Experience is sufficient to *confirm* a doctrine which is grounded on

Scripture. 2. Though many fancy they experience what they do not, this is no prejudice to real experience. 3. The design of that witness is, to assure us we are children of God ; and this design it does answer. 4. The true witness of the Spirit is known by its fruit, ' love, peace, joy ' , not indeed preceding, but following it. 5. It cannot be proved, that the direct as well as the indirect witness is not referred to in that very text, ' Know ye not your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you ? ' 6. The Spirit of God, witnessing with our spirit, does secure us from all delusion and, lastly, we are all liable to trials, wherein the testimony of our own spirit is not sufficient ; wherein nothing less than the direct testimony of God's Spirit can assure us that we are His children.

3. Two inferences may be drawn from the whole : the first, Let none ever presume to rest in any supposed testimony of the Spirit, which is separate from the fruit of it. If the Spirit of God does really testify that we are the children of God, the immediate consequence will be the fruit of the Spirit, even ' love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance.' And however this fruit may be clouded for a while, during the time of strong temptation, so that it does not appear to the tempted person, while Satan is sifting him as wheat ; yet the substantial part of it remains, even under the thickest cloud. It is true, joy in the Holy Ghost may be withdrawn, during the hour of trial ; yea, the soul may be ' exceeding sorrowful,' while ' the hour and power of darkness ' continue , but even this is generally restored with increase, till we rejoice ' with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

4. The second inference is, Let none rest in any supposed fruit of the Spirit without the witness. There may be foretastes of joy, of peace, of love, and those not delusive, but really from God, long before we have the witness in ourselves , before the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirits

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V. 4. The admission that there may be a real degree of the fruit of the Spirit before we are accepted in the Beloved is a distinct advance

on the teaching of the earlier sermons, in which, for example, the unconverted man is described as ' all sin, a mere lump of ungodliness, and who

that we have 'redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins.' Yea, there may be a [degree] of long-suffering, of gentleness, of fidelity, meekness, temperance (not a shadow thereof, but a real degree, by the preventing grace of God), before we 'are accepted in the Beloved,' and, consequently, before we have a testimony of our acceptance : but it is by no means advisable to rest here ; it is at the peril of our souls if we do. If we are wise, we shall be continually crying to God, until His Spirit cry in our heart, 'Abba, Father !' This is the privilege of all the children of God, and without this we can never be assured that we are His children. Without this we cannot retain a steady peace, nor avoid perplexing doubts and fears. But when we have once received this Spirit of adoption, this 'peace, which passeth all understanding,' and which expels all painful doubt and fear, will 'keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.' And when this has brought forth its genuine fruit, all inward and outward holiness, it is undoubtedly the will of Him that calleth us, to give us always what He has once given : so that there is no need that we should ever more be deprived of either the testimony of God's Spirit or the testimony of our own, the consciousness of our walking in all righteousness and true holiness.

NEWRY, *April 4, 1767.*

commits sin in every breath he draws' (Sermon VI, ii. 5). In the *Minutes* of 1770 it is declared, 'He that feareth God and worketh righteousness according to the light he has, is now accepted of God'; and it is added, 'We know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect'; so that if such a one says that he never did fear God and work righteousness, his saying so is no proof. It is the full recognition of 'preventing,' i.e. prevenient grace, grace given before conversion, that alone makes the Methodist doctrine consistent both with the Scripture and with the facts

of human experience. It is the mean between the Pelagianism which claims a natural sanctity for every human soul, by which it can of itself turn to God ; and the Augustinianism which ascribes salvation to the operation of irresistible grace, given only to the elect.

These concluding paragraphs are essential to the right understanding of the Methodist doctrine of the Witness of the Spirit, guarding it on the one hand from fanaticism, and on the other from the ancient Jewish error of justification by the works of the law.

## SERMON XLVI

### ON SIN IN BELIEVERS

THE *Journal* for March 28, 1763, says: 'I retired to Lewisham, and wrote the sermon on Sin in Believers in order to remove a mistake which some were labouring to propagate—that there is no sin in any that are justified.' He went, no doubt, to the house of his friend Ebenezer Blackwell at Lewisham, now one of the metropolitan boroughs, but then a pleasant country village, south of Deptford and Greenwich, and about five miles in a direct line south-east of St. Paul's. Blackwell was a partner in Martin's Lombard Street Bank, and was a faithful friend to Wesley from the beginning of his evangelistic work in 1739, until his own death on April 21, 1782. Here Wesley was nursed during his serious illness in 1754; and he records in his *Journal* for August 24, 1782, a visit to his widow: 'We took one more walk,' he says, 'round the garden and meadow which he took so much pains to improve. Upwards of forty years this has been my place of retirement when I could spare two or three days from London.' A view of the house will be found in the Standard edition of the *Journal*, v. 157. The sermon was published as a twopenny pamphlet at the Foundery in 1763.

Wesley had a previous sermon on the same text which he preached on February 5, 1738, at St. John the Evangelist, Millbank, Westminster; at St. Ann's, Manchester, on March 19 following; and at Whitam (Wytham, near Oxford) on the next Sunday. It is also recorded as delivered at the Foundery at six o'clock in the morning of Sunday, May 3, 1741, and at 3.45 on the following Tuesday at 'the dancing-room' at Deptford. The text is found occasionally in the sermon list, the last entry being February 2, 1760. It was appropriately chosen for a New Year's Day sermon at Bristol in 1758, and at Norwich in 1760. He describes it (*Journal*, May 3, 1741) as 'the scriptural account of one who is in Christ a new creature, from whom old things are passed away, and in whom all things are become new.' But in spite of Mr. Curnock's note in *Journal*, i. 436, I do not believe that this older sermon had anything in common with the one written at Lewisham, except the text. The description just quoted does not fit the Lewisham sermon, and sections iv. 4-13 are definitely stated in a footnote to be an answer to an article in the *Christian Magazine*,

obviously of that year. The two quotations from hymns are from the *Hymns and Sacred Poems* of 1739, so could not be in the 1738 sermon. The next sermon is also a new sermon on an old text, Mark i. 15, but it has nothing in common with Sermon VII on The Way to the Kingdom.

This sermon is most valuable as a corrective to the conclusion which might fairly be drawn from some of the earlier sermons, that after conversion, the believer is entirely free from sin; and that the existence of sinful desires in him is proof that he has not exercised saving faith in Christ.

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*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.*—2 COR. v. 17.

I. 1. Is there then sin in him that is in Christ? Does sin *remain* in one that believes in Him? Is there any sin in them that are born of God, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a question of mere curiosity, or that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather it is a point of the utmost moment to every serious Christian; the resolving of which very nearly concerns both his present and eternal happiness.

2. And yet I do not know that ever it was controverted in the primitive Church. Indeed there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians were agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians, who have left us anything in writing, declare with one voice, that even believers in Christ, till they are 'strong in the Lord and in the power of His might,' have need to 'wrestle with flesh and blood,' with an evil nature, as well as 'with principalities and powers.'

3. And herein our own Church (as indeed in most points) exactly copies after the primitive, declaring in her Ninth Article, 'Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every

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I. par. 1. 'A question of mere curiosity' is one which has an intellectual interest but no practical importance.

2. This passage (Eph. vi. 12) hardly bears the meaning here given to it. 'Flesh and blood' means man as

opposed to spiritual intelligences, and the Apostle's point is 'Our wrestling is not merely against human adversaries, but against the whole hierarchy of evil spirits.'

3. 'This lust hath of itself the nature of sin.' This is the crux of

man, whereby man is in his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *φρόνημα σαρκός*, is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, yet this lust hath of itself the nature of sin.'

4. The same testimony is given by all other Churches ;

the question. Are the desires of the flesh and the mind sinful, except in so far as they are allowed to prevail over the spirit? They existed in man before the Fall; for the appeal of the serpent was made to them, and it was through them that the woman yielded to his temptation. She saw 'that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise.' Her physical, aesthetic, and intellectual desires prompted her to take of the fruit of the tree; but it cannot be said that they were sinful until she had permitted them to outweigh the new spiritual sense of duty. The same desires existed in our Lord: the physical, for He hungered and thirsted and shrank from pain and was weary; the aesthetic, witness His interest in the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, the sports of the children, and the fragrance of the ointment; the intellectual, as may be seen in the keen logic of His answers to His opponents. Or if we take the list in ii. 2, we find in Him that just sense of His personal qualities which is the root of pride: 'Which of you convinceth Me of sin?'; the self-will which He admitted, even whilst He submitted it wholly to the will of the Father, 'Not My will, but Thine, be done'; love of the world, as in His enjoyment of the marriage-feast and the

society of His fellows; 'a friend of publicans and sinners'; lust, in its widest sense of animal desire, as when He hungered and thirsted; anger, for He was moved with indignation more than once; peevishness, which is the result of dissatisfaction with the present state of things, as when He was grieved at unbelief, and wept over Jerusalem, and shed tears at the grave of Lazarus. Had these feelings 'the nature of sin' in Him? They would have been the occasion of sin had He allowed them to prevail over His sense of duty; but they were not therefore sinful in themselves. But because in human experience they have gained such strength through their long tenure of control, and the habits of indulgence which have thus been formed, because in the unregenerate man they hold him in slavery so that he cannot do the things that he would, they are so associated with sin that it is hard not to regard them as in some sense sinful. There is no great harm done if we remember that there is no sin until the will consents, no matter how strong the motive may be. The only danger is that sensitive souls may blame themselves for the natural propensities which are not really blameworthy, and that so those may be grieved whom the Lord hath not grieved.

4. The Council of Trent declared:

not only by the Greek and Romish Church, but by every Reformed Church in Europe, of whatever denomination. Indeed some of these seem to carry the thing too far, so describing the corruption of heart in a believer, as scarce to allow that he has dominion over it, but, rather, is in bondage thereto, and, by this means, they leave hardly any distinction between a believer and an unbeliever.

5. To avoid this extreme, many well-meaning men, particularly those under the direction of the late Count Zinzendorf,

'Manere autem in baptizatis concupiscentiam vel fomitem. Hanc concupiscentiam, quam aliquando Apostolus peccatum appellat, sanctus synodus declarat ecclesiam catholicam nunquam intellexisse peccatum appellari, quod vere ac proprie in renatis peccatum sit, sed quia ex peccato est et ad peccatum inclinatur,' i.e. 'There remains in the baptized concupiscence or the fuel (of sin). This concupiscence, which sometimes the Apostle calls sin, the Holy Synod declares that the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin because it is truly and properly sin in the regenerate, but because it arises from sin and inclines to sin.' The Westminster Confession (iv. 5), on the contrary, asserts: 'This corruption of nature during this life doth remain in those that are regenerated; and although it be through Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both itself, and all the motions thereof, are truly and properly sin.' The Augsburg Confession says of the corruption of human nature: 'Nor is it by any means abolished or done away by baptism, since sin *always issues forth* from this woful source, as water from a fountain.' Dorner (*Christian Doctrine*, iv. 240) says: 'It is true, even the regenerate man still sins. As a new personality the man "cannot sin"; but the believer is not merely a new personality, but

the old man with his habits belongs still to the unity of his person.'

5. Count von Zinzendorf was born in 1700 and died in 1760. In 1721 he founded the brotherhood at Berthelsdorf, afterwards called Herrnhut, to which he gave the name of the Moravian Brethren. From 1733 onward missionaries were sent all over Europe, as well as to Greenland and North America. John Wesley met with a band of them whilst on his way to Georgia in 1735, and was greatly impressed with their simple piety and faith. On his return to England he sought them out, and his conversations with Peter Böhler, who was one of their members, greatly enlightened him as to the meaning of saving faith and the possibility of Assurance. In June 1738 he visited Herrnhut and spent about two months with them. But in the later months of 1739 differences began to arise in the Fetter Lane society, which culminated in his withdrawal from it on July 20, 1740, with several of his followers, and the starting of the first purely Methodist Society at the Foundery. The Count visited London in 1741, and Wesley had a conversation with him in Latin, in the course of which Zinzendorf affirmed: 'In the moment in which a man is justified, he is wholly sanctified. From that time he is neither more nor less holy

ran into another ; affirming, that ‘ all true believers are not only saved from the *dominion* of sin, but from the *being* of inward as well as outward sin, so that it no longer *remains* in them ’ : and from them, about twenty years ago, many of our countrymen imbibed the same opinion, that even the corruption of nature is *no more*, in those who believe in Christ.

6. It is true that, when the Germans were pressed upon this head, they soon allowed (many of them at least), that ‘ sin did still remain *in the flesh*, but not *in the heart* of a believer ’ : and, after a time, when the absurdity of this was shown, they fairly gave up the point ; allowing that sin did still remain, though not reign, in him that is born of God.

7. But the English, who had received it from them (some directly, some at second or third hand), were not so easily prevailed upon to part with a favourite opinion : and even when the generality of them were convinced it was utterly indefensible, a few could not be persuaded to give it up, but maintain it to this day.

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until his death.’ In a letter to the Count dated August 8, 1741, Wesley says : ‘ Others of you, who are now in England (particularly Mr. Molther) I have heard affirm that there is no justifying faith where there is not, in the full, proper sense, a new or clean heart.’ But Wesley had said the very same thing himself, for example, in Sermon I, ii. 6, and Sermon II, iii. 6 ; and Zinzendorf meant no more than that the ideal of the Christian life is complete salvation from sin. Moreover, he and his German followers, as the next paragraph admits, allowed that sin remained in the flesh, i.e. that the Old Man, the natural man subject to the desires of the flesh and the mind, still survived in the believer. The real trouble was that some of the English Moravians misunderstood his teaching, and argued that if they were entirely sanctified when they were converted, nothing more was

necessary ; good works were an impertinence, and the means of grace were not needed, seeing that the converted man had already received all the grace that was possible. This naturally led to gross Antinomianism, and men like Viney, Simpson, Bell, Bray, Edmonds, and Bowes taught that ‘ to read the Scriptures, or to pray, or to communicate, or to do any outward work, is deadly poison.’ The controversy continued with increasing bitterness until in 1745 Hutton published an advertisement in the *Daily Advertiser*, by direction of Zinzendorf, that the Moravians had no longer any connexion with the Wesleys.

7. ‘ To this day.’ In the early months of this year (1763) the London Societies were greatly disturbed by the Antinomian teaching of George Bell, John Dixon, Joseph Calvert, Benjamin Biggs, and others. ‘ Sad havoc,’ writes Charles Wesley on

II. 1. For the sake of those who really fear God, and desire to know 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' it may not be amiss to consider the point with calmness and impartiality. In doing this, I use indifferently the words, *regenerate*, *justified*, or *believers*, since, though they have not precisely the same meaning (the first implying an inward, actual change, the second a relative one, and the third the means whereby both the one and the other are wrought), yet they come to one and the same thing, as every one that believes, is both justified and born of God.

2. By sin, I here understand inward sin; any sinful temper, passion, or affection, such as pride, self-will, love of the world, in any kind or degree; such as lust, anger, peevishness; any disposition contrary to the mind which was in Christ.

3. The question is not concerning *outward sin*; whether a child of God *commit sin* or no. We all agree and earnestly maintain, 'He that committeth sin is of the devil.' We agree, 'Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.' Neither do we now inquire whether inward sin will *always* remain in the children of God; whether sin will continue in the soul as long as it continues in the body nor yet do we inquire whether a justified person may *relapse* either into inward or outward sin, but simply this, Is a justified or regenerate man freed from *all sin* as soon as he is justified? Is there then no sin in his heart?—nor ever after, unless he fall from grace?

4. We allow that the state of a justified person is inexpressibly great and glorious. He is born again, 'not of

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February 1, 'Satan has made of the flock.' Romaine writes on March 26: 'I pity Mr. John from my heart. His societies are in great confusion.' Thomas Maxfield separated from Wesley and started a meeting of his own at Snowfields Chapel. In *Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, published in this year, Wesley says: 'Beware of Moravianism, the most refined Antinomianism that ever was under the sun, producing the grossest libertinism, and most

flagrant breach of every moral precept. Beware of Moravian bigotry, stillness, self-indulgence, censoriousness, and solifidianism.'

II. 4. 'The state of a justified person.' But see the *Minutes*, 1770, *ad fin.* 'Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified state tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God,

blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' He is a child of God, a member of Christ, an heir of the kingdom of heaven. 'The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keepeth his heart and mind in Christ Jesus.' His very body is a 'temple of the Holy Ghost,' and an 'habitation of God through the Spirit.' He is 'created anew in Christ Jesus': he is *washed*, he is *sanctified*. His heart is purified by faith; he is cleansed 'from the corruption that is in the world', the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him.' And so long as he 'walketh in love' (which he may always do), he worships God in spirit and in truth. He keepeth the commandments of God, and doeth those things that are pleasing in His sight; so exercising himself as to 'have a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men' and he has power both over outward and inward sin, even from the moment he is justified.

III. 1. 'But was he not then freed from all sin, so that there is no sin in his heart?' I cannot say this, I cannot believe it; because St. Paul says the contrary. He is speaking to believers, and describing the state of believers in general, when he says, 'The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the

according to our works; according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour.' The question is whether we are to say that a justified person is to be described as having fallen from the state of justification whenever he commits sin. The previous paragraph assumes that every actual sin is a relapse from the justified state; that the man who so sins needs to be converted over again. This was certainly Wesley's view; but he evidently felt its difficulty as time went on, and tried to escape by denying that there is such a thing as a justified state; there is only a succession of moments, at

each of which a man is justified or not, according as he is at that moment free from actual sin, or committing it. But this is to ignore the supreme importance of conversion. This is an epoch-making experience in a man's life, and from that point on he is a regenerate person, an adopted son of God; and he may properly be so described, in spite of occasional lapses into actual sin. His normal attitude is that of faith in Christ and power over sin, though he may sometimes slip and fall. He has not lost his ideal because he sometimes fails to realize it. 'He that is bathed, needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean as a whole.'

Spirit against the flesh : these are contrary the one to the other ' (Gal. v. 17). Nothing can be more express. The Apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers ; that even in the regenerate there are two principles, ' contrary the one to the other.'

2. Again : when he writes to the believers at Corinth, to those who were ' sanctified in Christ Jesus ' (1 Cor. i. 2), he says, ' I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal ? ' (chap. iii. 1, 3). Now, here the Apostle speaks unto those who were unquestionably believers—whom, in the same breath, he styles his brethren in Christ—as being still, in a measure, carnal. He affirms, there was envying (an evil temper), occasioning strife among them, and yet does not give the least intimation that they had lost their faith. Nay, he manifestly declares they had not ; for then they would not have been babes in Christ. And (what is most remarkable of all) he speaks of being carnal, and babes in Christ, as one and the same thing ; plainly showing that every believer is (in a degree) carnal, while he is only a babe in Christ.

3. Indeed this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers—nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit—runs through all the Epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the holy Scriptures ; almost all the directions and exhortations therein are founded on this supposition, pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are, notwithstanding, acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and conquer these by the power of the faith which was in them.

4. And who can doubt, but there was faith in the angel of the church of Ephesus, when our Lord said to him, ' I know

III. 2. This example proves rather more than Wesley intended. The Corinthians not only felt the risings of envy, but gave way to it, so that strife, actual sin, resulted. Yet they were still babes in Christ ; they had not lost their faith.

4. Wesley interprets the ' angel of the church,' as in his *Notes on the New Testament*, to mean the ' pastor or ruling minister ' of the flock. It is perhaps better to understand the phrase as a symbolical expression for ' the prevailing spirit of the

thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience: thou hast patience, and for My name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted' ? (Rev. ii. 2-4). But was there, meantime, no sin in his heart? Yea, or Christ would not have added, 'Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.' This was real sin which God saw in his heart; of which, accordingly, he is exhorted to *repent*: and yet we have no authority to say, that even then he had no faith.

5. Nay, the angel of the church at Pergamos, also, is exhorted to *repent*, which implies sin, though our Lord expressly says, 'Thou hast not denied My faith' (verses 13, 16). And to the angel of the church in Sardis He says, 'Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.' The good which remained was *ready to die*, but was not actually dead (chap. iii. 2). So there was still a spark of faith even in him, which he is accordingly commanded to *hold fast* (verse 3).

6. Once more: when the Apostle exhorts believers to 'cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit' (2 Cor. vii. 1), he plainly teaches, that those believers were not yet cleansed therefrom.

Will you answer, 'He that abstains from all appearance of evil does, *ipso facto*, cleanse himself from all filthiness' ? Not in any wise. For instance, a man reviles me: I feel resentment, which is filthiness of spirit, yet I say not a word. Here I 'abstain from all appearance of evil'; but this does not cleanse me from that filthiness of spirit, as I experience to my sorrow.

7. And as this position, 'There is no sin in a believer, no carnal mind, no bent to backsliding,' is thus contrary to the Word of God, so it is to the experience of His children. These continually feel an heart bent to backsliding; a natural tendency to evil, a proneness to depart from God, and cleave to

church, and so practically, the church itself.' Here again there is more than a mere disposition to backslide; the church has not only lost its first love, but has fallen, and failed to do its first works.

5. In both these instances, there

is more than the tendency to sin. The church at Pergamos had fallen into Antinomianism; the church at Sardis had not fulfilled its works.

6. The true meaning of the passage quoted is: 'Abstain from every *kind* of evil.'

the things of earth. They are daily sensible of sin remaining in their heart—pride, self-will, unbelief, and of sin cleaving to all they speak and do, even their best actions and holiest duties. Yet at the same time they ‘know that they are of God’; they cannot doubt of it for a moment. They feel His Spirit clearly ‘witnessing with their spirit, that they are the children of God.’ They rejoice ‘in God through Christ Jesus, by whom they have now received the atonement.’ So that they are equally assured, that sin is in them, and that ‘Christ is in them the hope of glory.’

8. ‘But can Christ be in the same heart where sin is?’ Undoubtedly He can, otherwise it never could be saved therefrom. Where the sickness is, there is the Physician,

Carrying on His work within,  
Striving till He cast out sin.

Christ indeed cannot *reign* where sin *reigns*, neither will He *dwell* where any sin is *allowed*. But He *is* and *dwells* in the heart of every believer, who is *fighting against* all sin; although it be not yet purified, according to the purification of the sanctuary.

9. It has been observed before, that the opposite doctrine—that there is no sin in believers—is quite new in the Church of Christ; that it was never heard of for seventeen hundred years, never till it was discovered by Count Zinzendorf. I do not remember to have seen the least intimation of it, either in any ancient or modern writer; unless perhaps in some of the wild, ranting Antinomians. And these likewise say and unsay, acknowledging there is sin *in their flesh*, although no *sin in their heart*. But whatever doctrine is *new* must be *wrong*; for the *old* religion is the only *true* one; and no doctrine can

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8. The quotation is the second couplet in verse 4 of Charles Wesley’s Hymn for Whit-Sunday’ in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739. It is Hymn 234 in the Methodist Hymn-Book.

9. ‘Whatever doctrine is new must be wrong.’ Yes, if by *new* is meant

*not based on the Scriptures*; but there is a legitimate development of doctrine, resulting from new and better methods of interpretation of the Scriptures, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

be right, unless it is the very same 'which was from the beginning.'

10. One argument more against this new, unscriptural doctrine may be drawn from the dreadful consequences of it. One says, 'I felt anger to-day.' Must I reply, 'Then you have no faith?' Another says, 'I know what you advise is good, but my will is quite averse to it.' Must I tell him, 'Then you are an unbeliever, under the wrath and the curse of God?' What will be the natural consequence of this? Why, if he believe what I say, his soul will not only be grieved and wounded, but perhaps utterly destroyed; inasmuch as he will 'cast away' that 'confidence which hath great recompense of reward': and having cast away his shield, how shall he 'quench the fiery darts of the wicked one'? How shall he overcome the world, seeing 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith'? He stands disarmed in the midst of his enemies, open to all their assaults. What wonder, then, if he be utterly overthrown if they take him captive at their will, yea, if he fall from one wickedness to another, and never see good any more? I cannot, therefore, by any means receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified,—first, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God, thirdly, because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yesterday, and, lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences—not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition.

IV 1. However, let us give a fair hearing to the chief arguments of those who endeavour to support it. And it is, first, from Scripture they attempt to prove that there is no sin in a believer. They argue thus: 'The Scripture says, Every believer is born of God, is clean, is holy, is sanctified, is pure in heart, has a new heart, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Now, as "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," is altogether evil, so "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit," is altogether

good. Again a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his soul be unholy, while it is a temple of the Holy Ghost.'

I have put this objection as strong as possible, that its full weight may appear. Let us now examine it part by part. And (1) 'That which is born of the Spirit is spirit, is altogether good.' I allow the text, but not the comment. For the text affirms this, and no more,—that every man who is 'born of the Spirit' is a spiritual man. He is so: but so he may be, and yet not be altogether spiritual. The Christians at Corinth were spiritual men; else they had been no Christians at all: and yet they were not altogether spiritual; they were still, in part, carnal.—'But they were fallen from grace.' St. Paul says, No. They were even then babes in Christ. (2) 'But a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy.' Indeed he may. So the Corinthians were. 'Ye are washed,' says the Apostle, 'ye are sanctified'; namely, cleansed from fornication, idolatry, drunkenness, and all other outward sin (1 Cor. vi. 9–11): and yet, at the same time, in another sense of the word, they were unsanctified; they were not washed, not inwardly cleansed from envy, evil-surmising, partiality.—'But sure, they had not a new heart and an old heart together.' It is most sure they had; for, at that very time, their hearts were *truly*, yet not *entirely*, renewed. Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross; yet it was not wholly destroyed.—'But could they be unholy, while they were

IV. 1. 'Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross,' &c. So Dr. Pope (iii. 37) says: 'Crucifixion is a gradual mortal process, disqualifying the body from serving any master, and as such certainly tending to death.' So Rendall on Gal. v. 24 says: 'Not that (the will of the flesh) is already dead, but that the spirit has by one decisive victory asserted its complete supremacy in

all true Christians, and so given an earnest of its entire triumph in the end.' Banks (*Manual*, p. 170) says: 'We do not see why the particular form of death, crucifying, should be chosen, except to point its lingering nature.' Though, of course, there is a reference to the death of Christ on the cross as the atonement for sin.

temples of the Holy Ghost ? ' Yes ; that they were temples of the Holy Ghost is certain (1 Cor. vi. 19) , and it is equally certain, they were, in some degree, carnal, that is, unholy.

2. ' However, there is one scripture more which will put the matter out of question : " If any man be " a believer " in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new " (2 Cor. v. 17). Now, certainly a man cannot be a new creature and an old creature at once.' Yes, he may : he may be partly renewed, which was the very case with those at Corinth. They were doubtless ' renewed in the spirit of their mind,' or they could not have been so much as ' babes in Christ ' ; yet they had not the whole mind which was in Christ, for they *envied* one another. ' But it is said expressly, " Old things are passed away ; all things are become new." ' But we must not so interpret the Apostle's words, as to make him contradict himself. And if we will make him consistent with himself, the plain meaning of the words is this His old judgement concerning justification, holiness, happiness, indeed concerning the things of God in general, is now passed away , so are his old desires, designs, affections, tempers, and conversation. All these are undeniably become new, greatly changed from what they were ; and yet, though they are new, they are not wholly new. Still he feels, to his sorrow and shame, remains of the old man, too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections, though they cannot gain any advantage over him, as long as he watches unto prayer.

3. This whole argument, ' If he is clean, he is clean ' ; ' If he is holy, he is holy ' (and twenty more expressions of the same kind may easily be heaped together), is really no better than playing upon words , it is the fallacy of arguing from a *particular* to a *general* ; of inferring a general conclusion from particular premisses. Propose the sentence entire,

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2. ' We must not so interpret the Apostle's words as to make him contradict himself.' The only way to avoid this is to distinguish between the passages in which the ideal of

the Christian life is spoken of, and those which have reference to the imperfect realization of that ideal in actual practice.

and it runs thus : ' If he is holy at all, he is holy *altogether*.' That does not follow : every babe in Christ is holy, and yet not altogether so. He is saved from sin ; yet not entirely : it *remains*, though it does not *reign*. If you think it does not *remain* (in babes at least, whatever be the case with young men or fathers), you certainly have not considered the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the law of God (even the law of love laid down by St. Paul in the thirteenth of Corinthians) ; and that *every ἀνομία*, disconformity to, or deviation from, this law, *is sin*. Now, is there no disconformity to this in the heart or life of a believer ? What may be in an adult Christian, is another question, but what a stranger must he be to human nature, who can possibly imagine that this is the case with every babe in Christ !

4. ' But believers " walk after the Spirit " (Rom. viii. 1), and the Spirit of God dwells in them, consequently, they are delivered from the guilt, the power, or, in one word, the being of sin.'

These are coupled together, as if they were the same thing. But they are not the same thing. The *guilt* is one thing, the *power* another, and the *being* yet another. That believers are delivered from the *guilt* and *power* of sin, we allow, that they are delivered from the *being* of it, we deny. Nor does it in any wise follow from these texts. A man may have the

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4. Wesley inserted the following note here in the first edition : ' What follows for some pages is an answer to a paper, published in the *Christian Magazine*, pp. 577-582. I am surprised Mr. Dodd should give such a paper a place in his Magazine, which is directly contrary to our Ninth Article.'

It is a melancholy coincidence that this sermon on Sin in Believers should be thus expressly associated with the unhappy Dr. Dodd. This brilliant preacher was a most popular figure in London in 1756, when he took occasion to write to Wesley on the subject of Christian Perfection, and received a courteous answer from

him, which was printed in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1779, p. 475. He became editor of the *Christian Magazine*, and permitted a paper to appear in it in 1763, which Wesley here answers in detail. In the next year he published a pamphlet, *A Conference between a Mystic, a Hutchinsonian, a Calvinist, a Methodist, and others*, in which he accused Wesley of being a separatist from the Church, and of fighting against everybody. In 1767 he attacked the doctrine of Christian Perfection under the name of Rusticulus in the *Christian Magazine*, and was answered by Wesley in *Lloyd's Evening Post*,

Spirit of God dwelling in him, and may 'walk after the Spirit,' though he still feels 'the flesh lusting against the Spirit.'

5. 'But "the church is the body of Christ" (Col. i. 24), this implies, that its members are washed from all filthiness, otherwise it will follow, that Christ and Belial are incorporated with each other.'

Nay, it will not follow from hence, 'Those who are the mystical body of Christ still feel the flesh lusting against the Spirit,' that Christ has any fellowship with the devil, or with that sin which He enables them to resist and overcome.

6. 'But are not Christians "come to the heavenly Jerusalem," where "nothing defiled can enter"?' (Heb. xii. 22). Yes; 'and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect': that is,

Earth and heaven all agree,  
All is one great family.

And they are likewise holy and undefiled, while they 'walk after the Spirit'; although sensible there is another principle in them, and that 'these are contrary to each other.'

7. 'But Christians are reconciled to God. Now, this could not be, if any of the carnal mind remained; for this is enmity against God consequently, no reconciliation can be effected, but by its total destruction.'

We are 'reconciled to God through the blood of the cross': and in that moment the *φρόνημα σαρκός*, the corruption of nature, which is enmity with God, is put under our

April 3, in a letter, the most interesting sentence of which is that in which he says, 'I tell you flat, I have not attained the character I draw.' In February 1777 he forged the name of Lord Chesterfield to a bond for £4,200, was detected, tried, and hanged on June 26. Wesley visited him four times in prison, and rejoiced in his sincere penitence. He subsequently wrote a short life of him in the *Arminian Magazine*, 1783, p. 358.

6. This quotation seems to be given from memory from Charles

Wesley's hymn on the Communion of Saints, Part VI, verse 1, in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1740. Parts of it form Hymns 688 and 689 in the Methodist Hymn-Book. The lines run:

Him let earth and heaven proclaim,  
Earth and heaven record His name;  
Let us both in this agree,  
Both His one great family.

In the modern editions of the sermons the last line is erroneously printed,

All is one great family.

but the 1771 edition has it correctly,

All His one great family.

feet ; the flesh has no more dominion over us. But it still *exists*, and it is still in its nature enmity with God, lusting against His Spirit.

8. ' But " they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts " ' (Gal. v. 24). They have so ; yet it remains in them still, and often struggles to break from the cross. ' Nay, but they have " put off the old man with his deeds " ' (Col. iii. 9). They have ; and, in the sense above described, ' old things are passed away ; all things are become new.' A hundred texts may be cited to the same effect ; and they will all admit of the same answer.—' But, to say all in one word, " Christ gave Himself for the church, that it might be holy and without blemish " ' (Eph. v. 25, 27). And so it will be in the end : but it never was yet, from the beginning to this day.

9. ' But let experience speak : all who are justified do at that time find an absolute freedom from all sin.' That I doubt : but, if they do, do they find it ever after ? Else you gain nothing.—' If they do not, it is their own fault.' That remains to be proved.

10. ' But in the very nature of things, can a man have pride in him, and not be proud ; anger, and yet not be angry ? '

A man may have *pride* in him, may think of himself in some particulars above what he ought to think (and so be proud in that particular), and yet not be a proud man in his general character. He may have *anger* in him, yea, and a strong propensity to furious anger, without *giving way* to it. ' But can anger and pride be in that heart, where *only* meekness and humility are felt ? ' No but *some* pride and anger may be in that heart, where there is much humility and meekness.

' It avails not to say, " These tempers are there, but they do not *reign* " : for sin cannot, in any kind or degree, exist where it does not reign ; for *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin. Therefore, where one of them is, all must be.'

Strange indeed ! ' Sin cannot, in any kind or degree, *exist* where it does not reign ? ' Absolutely contrary this to

all experience, all Scripture, all common sense. Resentment of an affront is sin, it is *ἀνομία*, disconformity to the law of love. This has existed in me a thousand times. Yet it did not, and does not, *reign*.—‘ But *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin; therefore, where one is, all must be.’ No: in the instance before us, if the resentment I feel is not yielded to, even for a moment, there is no guilt at all, no condemnation from God upon that account. And in this case, it has no *power*. Though it ‘ lusteth against the Spirit,’ it cannot prevail. Here, therefore, as in ten thousand instances, there is *sin* without either *guilt* or *power*.

11. ‘ But the supposing sin in a believer is pregnant with everything frightful and discouraging. It implies the contending with a power that has the possession of our strength; maintains his usurpation of our hearts; and there prosecutes the war in defiance of our Redeemer.’ Not so: the supposing sin is in us, does not imply that it has the possession of our strength, no more than a man crucified has the possession of those that crucify him. As little does it imply, that ‘ sin maintains its usurpation of our hearts.’ The usurper is dethroned. He remains indeed where he once reigned; but remains *in chains*. So that he does, in some sense, ‘ prosecute the war, yet he grows weaker and weaker; while the believer goes on from strength to strength, conquering and to conquer.

12. ‘ I am not satisfied yet: he that has sin in him, is a slave to sin. Therefore you suppose a man to be justified, while he is a slave to sin. Now, if you allow men may be justified while they have pride, anger, or unbelief in them; nay, if you aver these are (at least for a time) in all that are justified; what wonder that we have so many proud, angry, unbelieving believers?’

I do not suppose any man who is justified is a slave to sin; yet I do suppose sin remains (at least for a time) in all that are justified.

‘ But if sin remains in a believer, he is a sinful man: if pride, for instance, then he is proud; if self-will, then he is self-willed; if unbelief, then he is an unbeliever; conse-

quently, no believer at all. How then does he differ from unbelievers, from unregenerate men ? ' This is still mere playing upon words. It means no more than, If there is sin, pride, self-will in him, then—there is sin, pride, self-will. And this nobody can deny. In that sense then he is proud, or self-willed. But he is not proud or self-willed in the same sense that unbelievers are, that is, *governed* by pride or self-will. Herein he differs from unregenerate men. They *obey* sin, he does not. Flesh is in them both: but they ' walk after the flesh ', he ' walks after the Spirit.'

' But how can *unbelief* be in a believer ? ' That word has two meanings. It means either no faith, or little faith, either the absence of faith, or the *weakness* of it. In the former sense unbelief is not in a believer; in the latter, it is in all babes. Their faith is commonly mixed with doubt or fear, that is, in the latter sense, with unbelief. ' Why are ye fearful,' says our Lord, ' O ye of little faith ? ' Again: ' O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ? ' You see here was *unbelief* in *believers*; little faith and much unbelief.

13. ' But this doctrine—that sin remains in a believer; that a man may be in the favour of God, while he has sin in his heart—certainly tends to encourage men in sin.' Understand the proposition right, and no such consequence follows. A man may be in God's favour though he feel sin, but not if he *yields* to it. *Having sin* does not forfeit the favour of God; *giving way to sin* does. Though the flesh in you ' lust against the Spirit,' you may still be a child of God; but if you ' walk after the flesh,' you are a child of the devil. Now this doctrine does not encourage to *obey* sin, but to resist it with all our might.

V 1. The sum of all this is: there are in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles, nature and grace, termed by St. Paul, the *flesh* and the *Spirit*. Hence, although even babes in Christ are *sanctified*, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual, yet in a degree they are carnal. Accordingly, believers are continually exhorted to watch against the

flesh, as well as the world and the devil. And to this agrees the constant experience of the children of God. While they feel this witness in themselves, they feel a will not wholly resigned to the will of God. They know they are in Him, and yet find an heart ready to depart from Him, a proneness to evil in many instances, and a backwardness to that which is good. The contrary doctrine is wholly new; never heard of in the Church of Christ, from the time of His coming into the world, till the time of Count Zinzendorf; and it is attended with the most fatal consequences. It cuts off all watching against our evil nature, against the Delilah which we are told is gone, though she is still lying in our bosom. It tears away the shield of weak believers, deprives them of their faith, and so leaves them exposed to all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

2. Let us, therefore, hold fast the sound doctrine 'once delivered to the saints,' and delivered down by them, with the written word, to all succeeding generations: that, although we are renewed, cleansed, purified, sanctified, the moment we truly believe in Christ, yet we are not then renewed, cleansed, purified altogether; but the flesh, the evil nature, still *remains* (though subdued), and wars against the Spirit. So much the more let us use all diligence in 'fighting the good fight of faith.' So much the more earnestly let us 'watch and pray' against the enemy within. The more carefully let us take to ourselves, and 'put on, the whole armour of God'; that, although 'we wrestle' both 'with flesh and blood, and with principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in high places,' we 'may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.'

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V. 2. 'Wicked spirits in high places': literally, 'the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.' The Jewish doctors distinguished seven heavens, the first and lowest of which was the atmosphere surrounding the earth. In this first heaven they gave to evil spirits their local habitation. The

Devil is 'the prince of the power of the air.' Hence the meaning is 'the hosts of evil spirits which inhabit the atmosphere.' Compare C. Wesley's hymn (314 in the Hymn-Book of 1876):

From thrones of glory driven,  
By flaming vengeance hurled,  
They throng the air, and darken heaven,  
And rule the lower world.

## SERMON XLVII

### THE REPENTANCE OF BELIEVERS

THIS sermon was written at Londonderry on April 24, 1767, and was published at London in 1768 as a separate pamphlet. It was inserted in the 1771 edition of the *Works* as a further elucidation of the previous sermon on Sin in Believers. It is on the same text as Sermon VII, which was one of Wesley's favourites; but it has nothing otherwise to do with it. The *Journal* shows that he reached Londonderry on Friday, April 17, and employed the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 'in speaking to the members of the society.' He wrote the sermon on Thursday and Friday, leaving the city on the Monday following. It is a careful and seasonable discourse, and no one can read it without realizing his need of the continual grace of the Holy Spirit. The second part contains a clear statement of the doctrine of entire sanctification. For a full discussion of this, see Sermon XXXV on Christian Perfection.

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*Repent ye, and believe the gospel.*—MARK i. 15.

1. IT is generally supposed, that repentance and faith are only the gate of religion, that they are necessary only at the beginning of our Christian course, when we are setting out in the way to the kingdom. And this may seem to be confirmed by the great Apostle, where, exhorting the Hebrew Christians to 'go on to perfection,' he teaches them to *leave* these first 'principles of the doctrine of Christ'; 'not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God'; which must at least mean, that they should comparatively leave these, that at first took up all their thoughts, in order to 'press forward toward the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.'

2. And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a repentance and a faith, which are, more especially, necessary at the be-

ginning : a repentance, which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness, and guiltiness, and helplessness, and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of God, which, our Lord observes, is ' within us ' ; and a faith, whereby we receive that kingdom, even ' righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.'

3. But, notwithstanding this, there is also a repentance and a faith (taking the words in another sense, a sense not quite the same, nor yet entirely different) which are requisite after we have ' believed the gospel ', yea, and in every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot ' run the race which is set before us.' And this repentance and faith are full as necessary, in order to our *continuance* and *growth* in grace, as the former faith and repentance were, in order to our *entering* into the kingdom of God.

But in what sense are we to repent and believe, after we are justified ? This is an important question, and worthy of being considered with the utmost attention.

I. And, first, in what sense are we to repent ?

1. Repentance frequently means an inward change, a change of mind from sin to holiness. But we now speak of it in a quite different sense, as it is one kind of self-knowledge, the knowing ourselves sinners, yea, guilty, helpless sinners, even though we know we are children of God.

2. Indeed when we first know this ; when we first find redemption in the blood of Jesus, when the love of God is first shed abroad in our hearts, and His kingdom set up therein, it is natural to suppose that we are no longer sinners, that all our sins are not only covered but destroyed.

As we do not then feel any evil in our hearts, we readily imagine none is there. Nay, some well-meaning men have imagined this not only at that time, but ever after, having

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I. 1. A better account of repentance is given in Sermon VII, ii. It is summarized as ' a lively conviction of thy inward and outward sin, sorrow of heart, remorse and self-condemnation, shame, fear of the wrath of God, earnest desire to escape

from that indignation, to cease from evil, and learn to do well.'

2. ' Some well-meaning men ' ; probably he is thinking of the Moravians. See Sermon XLVI, i. 5, and note.

persuaded themselves, that when they were justified, they were entirely sanctified: yea, they have laid it down as a general rule, in spite of Scripture, reason, and experience. These sincerely believe, and earnestly maintain, that all sin is destroyed when we are justified, and that there is no sin in the heart of a believer; but that it is altogether clean from that moment. But though we readily acknowledge, 'he that believeth is born of God,' and 'he that is born of God doth not commit sin'; yet we cannot allow that he does not *feel* it within: it does not *reign*, but it does remain. And a conviction of the sin which *remains* in our heart, is one great branch of the repentance we are now speaking of.

3. For it is seldom long before he who imagined all sin was gone, feels there is still *pride* in his heart. He is convinced both that in many respects he has thought of himself more highly than he ought to think, and that he has taken to himself the praise of something he had received, and gloried in it as though he had not received it; and yet he knows he is in the favour of God. He cannot, and ought not to, 'cast away his confidence.' 'The Spirit' still 'witnesses with' his 'spirit, that he is a child of God.'

4. Nor is it long before he feels *self-will* in his heart; even a will contrary to the will of God. A will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an understanding. This is an essential part of human nature, indeed of the nature of every intelligent being. Our blessed Lord Himself had a will as a man, otherwise He had not been a man. But His human will was invariably subject to the will of His Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, He could say, 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the will of God. He wills something, because it is pleasing to

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3. How searching and salutary are these paragraphs! Doubtless they were based mainly on Wesley's own experience. It is curious to notice how often he speaks of pride as one

of the besetments of the believer; so Charles singles it out:

Passion and appetite and pride,  
Pride, my old, dreadful, bosom foe!

4. But the fact that our Lord said,

nature, which is not pleasing to God, and he nills (is averse from) something, because it is painful to nature, which is the will of God concerning him. Indeed, suppose he continues in the faith, he fights against it with all his might: but this very thing implies that it really exists, and that he is conscious of it.

5. Now self-will, as well as pride, is a species of *idolatry*; and both are directly contrary to the love of God. The same observation may be made concerning the *love of the world*. But this likewise even true believers are liable to feel in themselves, and every one of them does feel it, more or less, sooner or later, in one branch or another. It is true, when he first 'passes from death unto life,' he desires nothing more but God. He can truly say, 'All my desire is unto Thee, and unto the remembrance of Thy name' 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.' But it is not so always. In process of time he will feel again, though perhaps only for a few moments, either 'the desire of the flesh,' or 'the desire of the eye,' or 'the pride of life.' Nay, if he does not continually watch and pray, he may find *lust* reviving; yea, and thrusting sore at him that he may fall, till he has scarce any strength left in him. He may feel the assaults of *inordinate affection*; yea, a strong propensity to 'love the creature more than the Creator', whether it be a child, a parent, a husband, or wife, or 'the friend that is as his own soul.' He may feel, in a thousand various ways, a desire of earthly things or pleasures. In the same proportion he will forget God, not seeking his happiness in Him, and consequently being a 'lover of pleasure more than a lover of God.'

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'Not My will, but Thine, be done,' implies that He *felt* His own will to be different from that of the Father, though He submitted it thereto.

'Nills'; a thoroughly good old English word though it has almost passed out of use.

5. It is unfortunate that in most theological works 'the desire of the

flesh' is taken to mean almost exclusively the sexual impulse, or lust in the modern sense. The whole treatment of the subject is confused by this limitation; for the desire of the flesh includes all the animal instincts, such as hunger, thirst, weariness, &c.

6. If he does not keep himself every moment, he will again feel the *desire of the eye* ; the desire of gratifying his imagination with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon. In how many ways does this desire assault the soul ! Perhaps with regard to the poorest trifles, such as dress, or furniture ; things never designed to satisfy the appetite of an immortal spirit. Yet, how natural is it for us, even after we have ‘tasted of the powers of the world to come,’ to sink again into these foolish, low desires of things that perish in the using ! How hard is it, even for those who know in whom they have believed, to conquer but one branch of the desire of the eye, *curiosity* ; constantly to trample it under their feet , to desire nothing merely because it is new !

7. And how hard is it even for the children of God wholly to conquer the *pride of life* ! St. John seems to mean by this nearly the same with what the world terms ‘the sense of honour.’ This is no other than a desire of, and delight in, ‘the honour that cometh of men’, a desire and love of praise ; and, which is always joined with it, a proportionable *fear of dispraise*. Nearly allied to this is *evil shame* ; the being ashamed of that wherein we ought to glory. And this is seldom divided from the *fear of man*, which brings a thousand snares upon the soul. Now where is he, even among those that seem strong in the faith, who does not find in himself a degree of all these evil tempers ? So that even these are but

6. Curiosity is not so much the desire of the eye as the desire of the mind, at any rate in the modern usage of the word. It is the desire for new knowledge, and like all the other desires of the mind it belongs to the non-spiritual, or natural, man, and may easily lead to sin.

7. ‘The pride of life’ is not so much the sense of honour as the vain-glory which gives a fictitious value to the outward circumstances of life, such as a fine house, a sumptuous table, costly clothes, earthly titles and honours, &c. The sense of honour, bequeathed to us from

the days of chivalry, is a distinctly moral and spiritual feeling, and amongst our Western peoples it forms a strong ground of appeal, too little used by preachers. Few Englishmen desire to be thought saints, but almost all want to be gentlemen ; and the true Christian is always a true gentleman. Both honour and saintliness may lead us astray ; as honour, falsely conceived, led to duelling, so saintliness, falsely conceived, may lead to cant and goody-goody-ness ; but in essence they have much in common.

in part 'crucified to the world'; for the evil root still remains in their heart.

8. And do we not feel other tempers, which are as contrary to the love of our neighbour as these are to the love of God? The love of our neighbour 'thinketh no evil.' Do not we find anything of the kind? Do we never find any *jealousies*, any *evil surmisings*, any groundless or unreasonable suspicions? He that is clear in these respects, let him cast the first stone at his neighbour. Who does not sometimes feel other tempers or inward motions, which he knows are contrary to brotherly love? If nothing of *malice*, *hatred*, or *bitterness*, is there no touch of *envy*; particularly toward those who enjoy some real or supposed good, which we desire, but cannot attain? Do we never find any degree of *resentment*, when we are injured or affronted; especially by those whom we peculiarly loved, and whom we had most laboured to help or oblige? Does injustice or ingratitude never excite in us any desire of *revenge*? any desire of returning evil for evil, instead of 'overcoming evil with good'? This also shows, how much is still in our heart, which is contrary to the love of our neighbour.

9. *Covetousness*, in every kind and degree, is certainly as contrary to this as to the love of God; whether *φιλαργυρία*, the love of money, which is too frequently 'the root of all evil', or *πλεονεξία*, literally, a desire of *having more*, or increasing in substance. And how few, even of the real children of God, are entirely free from both! Indeed one great man, Martin Luther, used to say, he 'never had any covetousness in him' (not only in his converted state, but) 'ever since he was born.' But, if so, I would not scruple to say, he was the only man born of a woman (except Him that was God as well as man), who had not, who was born without it. Nay, I believe,

8. 'Evil surmisings,' i.e. wicked suspicions.

9. What the Apostle does say is: 'The love of money is a' (not *the*) 'root of all evils.' This saying of Luther's is borne out by the fact that in spite of his wife's protests (she had the bills to pay!) 'she could

not get Luther to charge any fees for lecturing, to take any salary from the town for his services as pastor in the town church, nor take one farthing for all the books he wrote' (Lindsay's *Life of Luther*, p. 206).

never was any one born of God, that lived any considerable time after, who did not feel more or less of it many times, especially in the latter sense. We may therefore set it down as an undoubted truth, that covetousness, together with pride, and self-will, and anger, remain in the hearts even of them that are justified.

10. It is their experiencing this, which has inclined so many serious persons to understand the latter part of the seventh chapter to the Romans, not of them that are 'under the law,' that are convinced of sin, which is undoubtedly the meaning of the Apostle, but of them that are 'under grace'; that are 'justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ.' And it is most certain, they are thus far right,—there does still *remain*, even in them that are justified, a *mind* which is in some measure *carnal* (so the Apostle tells even the believers at Corinth, 'Ye are carnal'), an *heart bent to backsliding*, still ever ready to 'depart from the living God'; a propensity to pride, self-will, anger, revenge, love of the world, yea, and all evil: a root of bitterness, which, if the restraint were taken off for a moment, would instantly spring up; yea, such a depth of corruption, as, without clear light from God, we cannot possibly conceive. And a conviction of all this sin *remaining in their hearts* is the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

11. But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it *cleaves* to all our words and actions. Indeed it is to be feared, that many of our words are more than mixed with sin, that they are sinful altogether, for such undoubtedly is all *uncharitable conversation*, all which does not spring from brotherly love, all which does not agree with that golden rule, 'What ye would that others should do to you, even so do unto them.' Of this kind is all backbiting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil-speaking, that is, repeating the faults of absent persons; for none would have others repeat his faults when he is absent. Now how few are there, even among believers, who are in no degree guilty

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11. 'The good old rule'; best known in its Latin form, 'De mortuis (et absentibus) nil nisi bonum.'

of this, who steadily observe the good old rule, 'Of the dead and the absent, nothing but good!' And suppose they do, do they likewise abstain from *unprofitable conversation*? Yet all this is unquestionably sinful, and 'grieves the Holy Spirit of God': yea, and 'for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of judgement.'

12. But let it be supposed, that they continually 'watch and pray,' and so do 'not enter into' this 'temptation'; that they constantly set a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips; suppose they exercise themselves herein, that *all* their 'conversation may be in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers': yet do they not daily slide into useless discourse, notwithstanding all their caution? And even when they endeavour to speak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very *intention*? Do they speak merely to please God, and not partly to please themselves? Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will also? Or, if they begin with a single eye, do they go on 'looking unto Jesus,' and talking with Him all the time they are talking with their neighbour? When they are reproving sin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the sinner? When they are instructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride, any self-preference? When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward self-commendation 'Now you have spoke well'? Or any vanity—a desire that others should think so, and esteem them on the account? In some or all of these respects, how much sin cleaves to the best *conversation* even of believers! The conviction of which is another branch of the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

13. And how much sin, if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find cleaving to *their actions* also! Nay, are there not many of these, which, though they are such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no, nor excused, if we judge by the Word of God? Are there not many of their actions which, they themselves know, are not to

the glory of God? many, wherein they did not even aim at this; which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And of those that were, are there not many, wherein their eye is not singly fixed on God—wherein they are doing their own will, at least as much as His, and seeking to please themselves as much, if not more, than to please God? And while they are endeavouring to do good to their neighbour, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds? Hence their good actions, so called, are far from being strictly such, being polluted with such a mixture of evil: such are their works of *mercy*. And is there not the same mixture in their works of *piety*? While they are hearing the word which is able to save their souls, do they not frequently find such thoughts as make them afraid lest it should turn to their condemnation, rather than their salvation? Is it not often the same case, while they are endeavouring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public or private? Nay, while they are engaged in the most solemn service, even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts arise in them! Are not their hearts sometimes wandering to the ends of the earth, sometimes filled with such imaginations, as make them fear lest all their sacrifice should be an abomination to the Lord? So that they are now more ashamed of their best duties, than they were once of their worst sins.

14. Again: how many *sins of omission* are they chargeable with! We know the words of the Apostle: 'To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' But do they not know a thousand instances, wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of, in their duty toward God! How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing His word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected! So great reason had even that holy man, Archbishop Usher, after all his labours for God, to cry

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14. 'Archbishop Usher.' James known by his *Annales Veteris et Novi Testamenti*, in which he propounded the scheme of biblical

out, almost with his dying breath, 'Lord, forgive me my sins of omission !'

15. But besides these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves *inward defects* without number? defects of every kind: they have not the love, the fear, the confidence they ought to have, toward God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbour, to every child of man; no, nor even that which is due to their brethren, to every child of God, whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought, they are defective in everything,—in a deep consciousness of which they are ready to cry out, with M. De Renty, 'I am a ground all overrun with thorns'; or, with Job, 'I am vile: I abhor myself, and repent as in dust and ashes.'

16. A conviction of their *guiltiness* is another branch of that repentance which belongs to the children of God. But this is cautiously to be understood, and in a peculiar sense. For it is certain, 'there is no condemnation to them that are

chronology in which the Creation is dated 4004 B.C. Wesley, in *Large Minutes*, 1770, quotes with approval his remarks on the importance of teaching children the first principles of the gospel, and issued a *Life* of him in vol. xxvii. of the *Christian Library*. His last words, according to Parr's *Life*, p. 77, were 'O Lord! forgive me, especially my sins of omission.' A descendant of his, the Rev. P. C. Usher, was a minister of the Methodist Church in Victoria from 1858 until his death a few years ago.

15. M. De Renty was a saintly mystic who died at Paris in 1649 at the age of thirty-seven. Wesley read his *Life*, written by John Baptist S. Jure and translated into English by E. S. Gent, on a voyage from Savannah to Frederica in May 1736. De Renty's austerities of self-discipline, his zeal for the salva-

tion and bodily welfare of men, his formation of small societies for mutual Christian fellowship, appealed strongly to him; and he abridged its diffuse 358 pages to 67 whilst he was still in America, finishing it on January 6, 1738, and published it in London in 1741 as a fourpenny pamphlet. He read it to the Kinchin family, with whom he was staying at Dummer in Hampshire, in April 1738. He speaks of him as 'one of the brightest patterns of heavenly wisdom,' and quotes in his Sermon LV, On the Trinity, and in his *Journal*, March 1, 1786, a saying of his: 'I bear about with me continually an experimental verity, and a plenitude of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity.' In Sermon LXXXII, On Temptation, he gives two instances of De Renty's absolute submission to the will of God in severe trial.

in Christ Jesus,' that believe in Him, and, in the power of that faith, 'walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Yet can they no more bear the *strict justice* of God now, than before they believed. This pronounces them to be still *worthy of death*, on all the preceding accounts. And it would absolutely condemn them thereto, were it not for the atoning blood. Therefore they are thoroughly convinced, that they still *deserve* punishment, although it is hereby turned aside from them. But here there are extremes on one hand and on the other, and few steer clear of them. Most men strike on one or the other, either thinking themselves condemned when they are not, or thinking they *deserve* to be acquitted. Nay, the truth lies between they still *deserve*, strictly speaking, only the damnation of hell. But what they deserve does not come upon them, because they 'have an Advocate with the Father.' His life, and death, and intercession still interpose between them and condemnation.

17. A conviction of their *utter helplessness* is yet another branch of this repentance. I mean hereby two things first, that they are no more able now *of themselves* to think one good thought, to form one good desire, to speak one good word, or do one good work, than before they were justified, that they have still no kind or degree of strength *of their own*, no power either to do good, or resist evil, no ability to conquer or even withstand the world, the devil, or their own evil nature. They can, it is certain, do all these things, but it is not by their own strength. They have power to overcome all these enemies; for 'sin hath no more dominion over them'; but it is not from nature, either in whole or in part; it is the mere gift of God: nor is it given all at once, as if they had a stock laid up for many years; but from moment to moment.

18. By this helplessness I mean, secondly, an absolute inability to deliver ourselves from that guiltiness or desert of punishment whereof we are still conscious; yea, and an

17. 'From moment to moment' — a very important point; as Wesley says in the *Minutes* already quoted,

it is dangerous to speak of a sanctified state. See note above, p. 172.

inability to remove, by all the grace we have (to say nothing of our natural powers), either the pride, self-will, love of the world, anger, and general proneness to depart from God, which we experimentally know to *remain* in the heart, even of them that are regenerate; or the evil which, in spite of all our endeavours, cleaves to all our words and actions. Add to this, an utter inability wholly to avoid uncharitable, and, much more, unprofitable, conversation and an inability to avoid sins of omission, or to supply the numberless defects we are convinced of; especially the want of love, and other right tempers both to God and man.

19. If any man is not satisfied of this, if any believes that whoever is justified is able to remove these sins out of his heart and life, let him make the experiment. Let him try whether, by the grace he has already received, he can expel pride, self-will, or inbred sin in general. Let him try whether he can cleanse his words and actions from all mixture of evil; whether he can avoid all uncharitable and unprofitable conversation, with all the sins of omission; and, lastly, whether he can supply the numberless defects which he still finds in himself. Let him not be discouraged by one or two experiments, but repeat the trial again and again, and the longer he tries, the more deeply will he be convinced of his utter helplessness in all these respects.

20. Indeed this is so evident a truth, that wellnigh all the children of God, scattered abroad, however they differ in other points, yet generally agree in this: that although we may, 'by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body,' resist and conquer both outward and inward sin: although we may *weaken* our enemies day by day; yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at justification we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much,

20. Wesley's doctrine of the definite consummation of entire sanctification at a single moment as the result of an act of faith is logically unanswerable; but it is absurd to say that, if there be none but a gradual work of God, we must

remain full of sin till death. The gradual work, which he fully admits, consists in the steady growth of power over sin, as the result of growing faith; in no sense is the believer 'full of sin' until sin is *all* destroyed.

we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot, till it shall please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, 'Be clean'; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only, the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more. But if there be no such second change, if there be no instantaneous deliverance after justification, if there be *none but* a gradual work of God (that there is a gradual work none denies), then we must be content, as well as we can, to remain full of sin till death, and, if so, we must remain guilty till death, continually *deserving* punishment. For it is impossible the guilt, or desert of punishment, should be removed from us, as long as all this sin remains in our heart, and cleaves to our words and actions. Nay, in rigorous justice, all we think, and speak, and act, continually increases it.

II. 1. In this sense we are to *repent*, after we are justified. And till we do so, we can go no farther. For, till we are sensible of our disease, it admits of no cure. But, supposing we do thus repent, then are we called to 'believe the gospel.'

2. And this also is to be understood in a peculiar sense, different from that wherein we believed in order to justification. Believe the glad tidings of great salvation, which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that He who is 'the brightness of His Father's glory, the express image of His person,' is 'able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through Him.' He is able to save you from all the sin that still remains in your heart. He is able to save you from all the sin that cleaves to all your words and actions. He is able to save you from sins of omission, and to supply whatever is wanting in you. It is true, this is impossible with man; but with God-Man all things are possible. For what can be too hard for Him who hath 'all power in heaven and in earth'? Indeed, His bare power to do this is not a sufficient foundation for our faith that He will do it, that He will thus exert His power, unless He hath promised it. But this He has done: He has promised it over and over, in the strongest terms. He has given us these 'exceed-

ing great and precious promises,' both in the Old and the New Testament. So we read in the law, in the most ancient part of the oracles of God, 'The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul' (Deut. xxx. 6). So in the Psalms, 'He shall redeem Israel,' the Israel of God, 'from all his sins.' So in the Prophet, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. And I will put My Spirit within you, and ye shall keep My judgements, and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses' (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, &c.). So likewise in the New Testament, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us . . . to perform the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, that He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies should serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life' (Luke i. 68, &c.).

3. You have therefore good reason to believe, He is not only able, but willing to do this; to cleanse you from all your filthiness of flesh and spirit, to 'save you from all your uncleannesses.' This is the thing which you now long for, this is the faith which you now particularly need, namely, that the Great Physician, the Lover of my soul, is willing to make me clean. But is He willing to do this to-morrow, or to-day? Let Him answer for Himself: 'To-day, if ye will hear' My 'voice, harden not your hearts.' If you put it off till to-

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II. 3. 'To-day if ye will hear His voice,' &c. This passage has really nothing to do with entire sanctification. It is a curious paradox that in his letter to Dr. Dodd in this very year, Wesley tells him flatly that he has not attained Christian perfection; nor, as far as is known, did he ever profess to have received this blessing. In the *Brief Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, written in the January of this year (1767), he says:

'I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently, in an instant. But I believe a gradual work, both preceding and following that instant. As to the time: I believe this instant generally is the instant of death, the moment before the soul leaves the body. But I believe it may be ten, twenty, or forty years before.' But see introduction to Sermon XXXV.

morrow, you harden your hearts ; you refuse to hear His voice. Believe, therefore, that He is willing to save you *to-day*. He is willing to save you *now*. 'Behold, now is the accepted time.' He now saith, 'Be thou clean !' Only believe, and you also will immediately find, 'all things are possible to him that believeth.'

4. Continue to believe in Him that loved thee, and gave Himself for thee ; that bore all thy sins in His own body on the tree, and He saveth thee from all condemnation, by His blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on 'from faith to faith, when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleannesses, we are likewise saved from all that *guilt*, that *desert* of punishment, which we felt before. So that then we may say, not only,

Every moment, Lord, I *want*  
The merit of Thy death ;

but, likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

Every moment, Lord, I *have*  
The merit of Thy death !

For, by that faith in His life, death, and intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment, we are every whit clean, and there is not only now no condemnation for us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives.

5. By the same faith we feel the power of Christ every moment resting upon us, whereby alone we are what we are ; whereby we are enabled to continue in spiritual life, and without which, notwithstanding all our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment. But as long as we retain our faith in Him, we 'draw water out of the wells of salvation.' Leaning on our Beloved, even Christ in us the hope of glory, who dwelleth in our hearts by faith, who likewise is

4. The lines quoted are from Charles Wesley's Hymn on Isa. xxxii. 2, in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, four verses of which are Hymn 468 in the Methodist Hymn-Book. These

are the last two lines of verse 5, and run as in the first quotation ; the second is John Wesley's deliberate alteration, from 'want' to 'have.'

5. The quotations at the end of

ever interceding for us at the right hand of God, we receive help from Him, to think, and speak, and act, what is acceptable in His sight. Thus does He 'prevent' them that believe, in all their 'doings, and further them with His continual help'; so that all their designs, conversations, and actions are 'begun, continued, and ended in Him.' Thus doth He 'cleanse the thoughts of their hearts, by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love Him, and worthily magnify His holy name.'

6. Thus it is, that in the children of God, repentance and faith exactly answer each other. By repentance we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and cleaving to our words and actions: by faith, we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts, and cleansing our hands. By repentance, we are still sensible that we deserve punishment for all our tempers, and words, and actions: by faith, we are conscious that our Advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By repentance we have an abiding conviction that there is no help in us: by faith we receive not only mercy, 'but grace to help in' *every* 'time of need.' Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help: faith accepts all the help we stand in need of, from Him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says, 'Without Him I can do nothing': faith says, 'I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.' Through Him I can not only overcome, but expel, all the enemies of my soul. Through Him I can 'love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul, and strength', yea, and 'walk in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of my life.'

III. 1. From what has been said we may easily learn the mischievousness of that opinion,—that we are *wholly* sanctified when we are justified, that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin. It is true, we are then delivered, as was observed

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the paragraph are from the fourth of the Collects appended to the Communion Service, and from the

Collect at the beginning of the Communion Service respectively.

before, from the dominion of outward sin ; and, at the same time, the power of inward sin is so broken, that we need no longer follow, or be led by it : but it is by no means true, that inward sin is then totally destroyed ; that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart ; or that the carnal mind, and the heart bent to back-sliding, are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary is not, as some may think, an innocent harmless mistake. ~~No :~~ it does immense harm : it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change ; for it is manifest, ' they that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.' If, therefore, we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any further healing. On this supposition it is absurd to expect a farther deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous.

2. On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole, that our hearts are not fully purified, that there is yet in us a ' carnal mind,' which is still in its nature ' enmity against God ' ; that a whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed ; shows, beyond all possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a farther change. We allow, that at the very moment of justification, we are *born again* : in that instant we experience that inward change from ' darkness into marvellous light ' ; from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God ; from the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. But are we then *entirely* changed ? Are we *wholly* transformed into the image of Him that created us ? Far from it : we still retain a depth of sin ; and it is the consciousness of this which constrains us to groan, for a full deliverance, to Him that is mighty to save. Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruption of their hearts, or but slightly, and, as it were, notionally convinced, have little

III. 2. ' Notionally convinced,' i.e. only intellectually or logically convinced of it as a general principle, but without any realization of it as their own experience. The quotation is the fifth verse of Charles

Wesley's hymn on Matt. xi. 28 in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742. Six verses of the original fourteen are Hymn 545 in the Methodist Hymn-Book.

concern about *entire sanctification*. They may possibly hold the opinion, that such a thing is to be, either at death, or some time they know not when, before it. But they have no great uneasiness for the want of it, and no great hunger or thirst after it. They cannot, until they know themselves better, until they repent in the sense above described, until God unveils the inbred monster's face, and shows them the real state of their souls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they groan for deliverance from it. Then, and not till then, will they cry out, in the agony of their soul,

Break off the yoke of inbred sin,  
And fully set my spirit free !  
I cannot rest till pure within,  
Till I am wholly lost in Thee.

3. We may learn from hence, secondly, that a deep conviction of our *demerit*, after we are accepted (which in one sense may be termed guilt), is absolutely necessary, in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning blood ; in order to our feeling that we need this as much, after we are justified, as ever we did before. Without this conviction, we cannot but account the blood of the covenant *as a common thing*, something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which, of consequence, would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that

He ever lives above,  
For us to intercede,  
His all-atoning love,  
His precious blood, to plead.

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3. The first quotation is the beginning of verse 2 in Charles Wesley's hymn entitled 'Behold the Man !' in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, Pt. II. It is Hymn 363 in the Methodist Hymn-Book ; and few hymns have had a warmer place in the hearts of the Methodist people,

or a more striking record of usefulness. The second line in the original is,

For me to intercede.

The second quotation is verse 16 in Charles Wesley's hymn entitled 'A Thanksgiving,' in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742, Pt. II. Fourteen of

It is this repentance, and the faith intimately connected with it, which are expressed in those strong lines,—

I sin in every breath I draw,  
Nor do Thy will, nor keep Thy law  
On earth, as angels do above :  
But still the fountain open stands,  
Washes my feet, my heart, my hands,  
Till I am perfected in love.

4. We may observe, thirdly, a deep conviction of our utter *helplessness*, of our total inability to retain anything we have received, much more to deliver ourselves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Christ by faith, not only as our Priest, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to ‘magnify Him,’ indeed ; to ‘give Him all the glory of His grace’ ; to ‘make Him a whole Christ, an entire Saviour ; and truly to set the crown upon His head.’ These excellent words, as they have frequently been used, have little or no meaning ; but they are fulfilled in a strong and deep sense, when we thus, as it were, go out of ourselves, in order to be swallowed up in Him ; when we sink into nothing, that He may be all in all. Then, His almighty grace having abolished ‘every high thing which exalted itself against Him,’ every temper, and thought, and word, and work ‘is brought to the obedience of Christ.’

LONDONDERRY, *April 24, 1767.*

the original eighteen verses make up Hymns 365 and 366 in the Methodist Hymn-Book of 1876, though this particular verse is omitted. The hymn does not appear in the Methodist Hymn-Book of 1904. The fifth line runs in the original,

Washes my feet, and head, and hands.

It is a pity that some of the fine verses of this hymn have not been retained in the Hymn-Book ; though we may admit that

I sin in every breath I draw

is not only a strong but an exaggerated line.

4. ‘To make him a whole Christ,’ &c. These and similar expressions were constantly used by the Antinomians, who held that they magnified the work of Christ by denying any obligation to perform good works or to attend the means of grace. This is what Wesley is thinking of in the next sentence. I imagine the words themselves are of Moravian origin, though I have not been able to find them *totidem verbis*.

## SERMON XLVIII

### THE GREAT ASSIZE

PREACHED AT THE ASSIZES HELD BEFORE THE HONOURABLE  
SIR EDWARD CLIVE, KNIGHT, ONE OF THE JUDGES OF  
HIS MAJESTY'S COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, IN ST. PAUL'S  
CHURCH, BEDFORD, ON FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 1758,  
PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF WILLIAM COLE, ESQ.,  
HIGH SHERIFF OF THE COUNTY, AND OTHERS.

THIS sermon was added in the 1771 edition partly because of the unique occasion of its delivery, partly because there was no sermon in the original forty-four on this subject. Wesley says of it in his *Journal* for September 1, 1778, 'I cannot write a better [sermon] on the Great Assize than I did twenty years ago.' It was customary for the judges of Assize to attend a service in the parish church of the town in which they were sitting, in all the splendour of their scarlet and ermine, with their trumpeters, javelin-men, and other officers of the Court in attendance; and it was one of the duties of the High Sheriff of the County to make arrangements for the preaching of the sermon. Mr. William Cole, who was High Sheriff of Bedfordshire at this time, was a friend of Wesley, and was his host in November 1759. He lived at Sundon, a village a little to the east of the main road from Luton to Bedford, about five miles north of Luton. He built the first Methodist preaching-house in Luton. Probably he made the arrangements for the Assize sermon when Wesley was at Bedford in November 1757; and on Monday, February 27, Wesley records, 'Having a sermon to write against the Assizes at Bedford, I retired for a few days to Lewisham'—doubtless to the house of Mr. Ebenezer Blackwell. He left London on Monday, March 6, at seven in the morning, and reached Mr. Cole's house at Sundon by three in the afternoon. On the Thursday he rode to Bedford, expecting to have to preach that day; but for some reason, probably because the cases at the previous Assize town had taken more time than was anticipated, the service was postponed to the following day. The service was held in the forenoon at St. Paul's Church, one of the chief archi-

tectural ornaments of the town. It stands on the north side of the River Ouse, and has a fine tower and octagonal spire. The old stone pulpit from which Wesley preached is still preserved in the south aisle, and a photograph of it and the church may be seen in the Standard edition of the *Journal*, vol. iv. p. 403. The *Journal* records, 'The congregation at St. Paul's was very large and very attentive. The judge, immediately after sermon, sent me an invitation to dine with him; but having no time I was obliged to send my excuse, and set out between one and two.' He had to reach Epworth for the Sunday, and got to Stilton, about thirty miles, by seven. Next morning he started between four and five, and through frost and flood covered the ninety miles to Epworth by ten that night. He says, 'I was little more tired than when I rose in the morning!'—tough, wiry little man that he was!

The judge on this occasion was Sir Edward Clive, who had been made a Judge of the Common Pleas and knighted in 1753. He was just a year younger than John Wesley, and died in 1771. A caricature of him may be found in Hogarth's plate 'The Bench,' published in this very year, 1758. He is sitting between the Lord Chief Justice Willes and Mr. Justice Bathurst, who has fallen asleep. He is represented with a small head almost lost in his full-bottomed wig, a long, thin nose, and a nut-cracker chin. The sermon was published separately by Trye in the same year at the request of the High Sheriff and others, and went through some ten editions in Wesley's lifetime. The Rev. Richard Green calls it 'a model sermon,' and says, 'It is well-formed, plain, practical, earnest; the statements are all supported by apt scripture, and the truth faithfully applied to the conscience.' The title 'The Great Assize' was a familiar name for the Last Judgement; it is found as early as 1340 in Hampole's *Prick of Conscience*, 5514, and several other instances are given in the *Oxford Dictionary*, s.v. 'Assize.' The preliminary note, 'Preached at the Assizes,' &c., in the modern editions is from the title-page of the second edition, also published in London by Trye; it appears in an abbreviated form in the 1771 edition, without the last clause 'Published at the request,' &c.

Two points in the sermon call for criticism in view of recent investigations into the eschatological teaching of the New Testament. First, Wesley identifies without discussion the Day of Jehovah of the Old Testament prophets and the Jewish Apocalyptic writers with the Day of our Lord's second coming, the general resurrection, and the last Judgement, of the New Testament documents; and he uses indiscriminately passages from all these sources to give detail and picturesqueness to his picture. Moreover he adopts the most literal interpretation of them all, the only points at which he baulks being the length of the Day of Judgement, which he thinks 'may not improbably

comprise several thousand years'; and the opening of the books, which he says is 'a figurative expression.' It can hardly be doubted that our Lord's teaching was largely influenced by the Old Testament and Apocalyptic conception, especially in His predictions about the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish polity; but He added to it the idea of an individual as well as a national judgement, and extended its scope to the whole world.

In the second place Wesley adopts the view that the Last Judgement will take place at some definite time in the future history of the world, when the lives of all men will be reviewed and sentence pronounced upon them. This is certainly the obvious meaning of the teaching of the books of the New Testament which were written before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; but when that tremendous catastrophe had taken place, and it became clear that the General Judgement and the End of the Age had not come, we find in the writings of St. John a new strain of teaching, implying that the Judgement is really continuous and is now going on. Thus 'He that believeth on Him is not judged; he that believeth not hath been judged already. And this is the judgement, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil' (John iii. 18). Again, 'Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgement. The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live' (John v. 24). Again, 'For judgement came I into this world' (John ix. 39). Again, 'Now is the judgement of this world' (John xii. 31). At the same time St. John also speaks of a future general resurrection, of 'the last day' and 'the day of judgement.' It seems clear (1) that our Lord spoke in terms of the current national belief of His time, which was derived from the Old Testament prophets and the Apocalypses of the Persian and Greek periods, the time 'between the Books'; (2) that He used the pictorial rather than the abstract method of conveying the truth to His hearers. We may thus safely say that the essential elements of His teaching are (1) that there will be a universal judgement of all men; (2) that He Himself will be the Judge; (3) that the standard of judgement will be His own life and teaching, as far as those who have had the opportunity of knowing it are concerned; (4) that for the heathen the standard will be their own conscience; (5) that the issues of the judgement are decided in this life, and (6) that the decision will be final. But as to the extent to which His representations of the Last Judgement are to be taken as expressing literal physical fact, we shall be wisest if we confess our ignorance and our inability to reach any dogmatic conclusion.

As to the text, the better attested reading is, 'We shall all stand

before the judgement seat of God ' ; indeed, this text is used by some of the Fathers to prove the divinity of Christ, because it is plain from many passages that He will be the Judge ; and the Judge is here called God.

*We shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ.*—ROM. xiv. 10.

1. How many circumstances concur to raise the awfulness of the present solemnity !—The general *concourse* of people of every age, sex, rank, and condition of life, willingly or unwillingly gathered together, not only from the neighbouring, but from distant, parts ; *criminals*, speedily to be brought forth and having no way to escape ; *officers*, waiting in their various posts, to execute the orders which shall be given , and the *representative* of our gracious *Sovereign*, whom we so highly reverence and honour. The *occasion* likewise of this assembly adds not a little to the solemnity of it : to hear and determine causes of every kind, some of which are of the most important nature ; on which depends no less than life or death, death that uncovers the face of eternity ! It was, doubtless, in order to increase the serious sense of these things, and not in the minds of the vulgar only that the wisdom of our forefathers did not disdain to appoint even several minute circumstances of this solemnity. For these also, by means of the eye or ear, may more deeply affect the heart : and when viewed in this light, trumpets, staves, apparel, are no longer trifling or insignificant, but sub-

Par. 1. ' Our gracious Sovereign ' is George II. Wesley was always intensely loyal. In 1744 he wrote an Address from his Societies to the King in which he says, " we are ready to obey your Majesty to the uttermost, in all things which we conceive to be agreeable [to the Word of God]. And we earnestly exhort all with whom we converse, as they fear God, to honour the King.' The Address was not sent, mainly because it might have been taken to imply that the Methodists were ' a body distinct from the National Church.' In 1745, the year of the Young Pre-

tender's invasion of England, he wrote to the Mayor of Newcastle, ' All I can do for his Majesty, whom I honour and love—I think not less than I did my own father—is this: I cry unto God, day by day, to put all his enemies to confusion,' &c. When George II died in October 1760 he records in his *Journal* (October 25), ' King George was gathered to his fathers. When will England have a better Prince ? '

One thinks of Carlyle (*Sartor*, i. 9). ' Has not your Red hanging-individual a horsehair wig, squirrel-skins, and a plush - gown, whereby all

servient, in their kind and degree, to the most valuable ends of society.

2. But, as awful as this solemnity is, one far more awful is at hand. For yet a little while, and 'we shall all stand before the judgement-seat of Christ.' 'For, as I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.' And in that day, 'every one of us shall give account of himself to God.'

3. Had all men a deep sense of this, how effectually would it secure the interests of society! For what more forcible motive can be conceived to the practice of genuine morality? to a steady pursuit of solid virtue? an uniform walking in justice, mercy, and truth? What could strengthen our hands in all that is good, and deter us from all evil, like a strong conviction of this, 'The Judge standeth at the door'; and we are shortly to stand before Him?

4. It may not therefore be improper, or unsuitable to the design of the present assembly, to consider,—

- I. THE CHIEF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WILL PRECEDE OUR  
STANDING BEFORE THE JUDGEMENT-SEAT OF CHRIST;
- II. THE JUDGEMENT ITSELF; AND,
- III. A FEW OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WILL FOLLOW IT.

I. Let us, in the first place, consider the chief circumstances which will precede our standing before the judgement-seat of Christ.

And, first, God will show 'signs in the earth beneath' (Acts ii. 19), particularly He will 'arise to shake terribly the earth.' 'The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage' (Isa. xxiv. 20). 'There shall be earthquakes,' *κατὰ τόπους* (not in divers only, but) 'in

mortals know that he is a JUDGE? Society, which the more I think of it astonishes me the more, is founded upon Cloth.' Wesley never despised form and ceremonial; he robed himself even for his Bible studies with his Societies in London and Bristol, and for his open-air services.

I. 1. This paragraph, finely and impressively composed as it is, is a defiance of all sound exegesis. Some of the passages quoted refer to the invasion of Judah by the Assyrians, some to the coming of the Holy Ghost, some to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, some to

*all places* ; not in one only, or a few, but in every part of the habitable world (Luke xxi. 11) ; even 'such as were not since men were upon the earth, so mighty earthquakes and so great.' In one of these 'every island shall flee away, and the mountains will not be found' (Rev. xvi. 20). Meantime all the waters of the terraqueous globe will feel the violence of those concussions ; 'the sea and waves roaring' (Luke xxi. 25), with such an agitation as had never been known before, since the hour that 'the fountains of the great deep were broken up,' to destroy the earth, which then 'stood out of the water and in the water.' The air will be all storm and tempest, full of dark vapours and 'pillars of smoke' (Joel ii. 30) ; resounding with thunder from pole to pole, and torn with ten thousand lightnings. But the commotion will not stop in the region of the air, 'the powers of heaven also shall be shaken. There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars' (Luke xxi. 25, 26), those fixed, as well as those that move round them. 'The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come' (Joel ii. 31). 'The stars shall withdraw their shining' (Joel iii. 15), yea, and 'fall from heaven' (Rev. vi. 13), being thrown out of their orbits. And then shall be heard the universal *shout*, from all the companies of heaven, followed by the 'voice of the archangel,' proclaiming the approach of the Son of God and Man, 'and the trumpet of God,' sounding an alarm to all that sleep in the dust of the earth (1 Thess. iv. 16). In consequence of this, all the graves shall open, and the bodies of men arise. The

the downfall of Rome herself. All these were in a sense 'days of Jehovah' ; but there is no warrant for transferring all these signs to the final day of judgement, nor for their literal interpretation.

This just remark on the difference between the present and the resurrection bodies is worked out in detail in Sermon CXXXVII, originally written by Benjamin Calamy and revised and abridged by Wesley

in 1732. 'Substance' and 'properties' are here used in their philosophical sense ; the body will be the same in essence (not composed of the same material particles), but its properties, i.e. its characteristics and qualities, will be entirely changed. Above all, it will be a 'pneumatical' and not a 'psychical' body, i.e. it will be well adapted for the use and manifestation of the spirit, as the present body is adapted for the use

sea also shall give up the dead which are therein (Rev. xx. 13), and every one shall rise with 'his own body': his own in substance, although so changed in its properties as we cannot now conceive. 'For this corruptible will' then 'put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality' (1 Cor. xv. 53). Yea, 'death and hades,' the invisible world, shall 'deliver up the dead that are in them' (Rev. xx. 13). So that all who ever lived and died, since God created man, shall be raised incorruptible and immortal.

2. At the same time, 'the Son of Man shall send forth His angels' over all the earth; 'and they shall gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other' (Matt. xxiv. 31). And the Lord Himself shall come with clouds, in His own glory, and the glory of His Father, with ten thousand of His saints, even myriads of angels, and shall sit upon the throne of His glory. 'And before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another, and shall set the sheep,' the good, 'on His right hand, and the goats,' the wicked, 'upon the left' (Matt. xxv. 31, &c.). Concerning this general assembly it is, that the beloved disciple speaks thus: 'I saw the dead,' all that had been dead, 'small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened' (a figurative expression, plainly referring to the manner of proceeding among men), 'and the dead were judged

and manifestation of the psyche or animal soul.

'Hades' is very properly substituted for the A.V. 'hell,' which is here, and indeed in all passages where it is the translation of Sheol, or Hades, most misleading to the modern English reader. It is the world of departed spirits, not the place of punishment of the Devil and his angels.

2. 'All nations'—more exactly, 'all the Gentiles.' This account of the judgement refers only to the judgement of the heathen nations, who have not heard of Christ; and the standard of judgement is accord-

ingly not their relation to Him, but their fulfilment of the common human duties of kindness and charity there set out. It is a supplement to the three preceding parables of the Steward, the Virgins, and the Talents; the first describing the judgement of the Christian minister, the second and third the two sides of the judgement of those who have heard the gospel; first from the point of view of faith, second from the point of view of works.

'The beloved disciple.' Wesley of course accepts the Johannine authorship of the Apocalypse.

out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works' (Rev. xx. 12).

II. These are the chief circumstances which are recorded in the oracles of God, as preceding the general judgement. We are, secondly, to consider the judgement itself, so far as it hath pleased God to reveal it.

1. The person by whom God will judge the world, is His only-begotten Son, whose 'goings forth are from everlasting'; 'who is God over all, blessed for ever.' Unto Him, being 'the outbeaming of His Father's glory, the express image of His person' (Heb. i. 3), the Father 'hath committed all judgement, because He is the Son of Man' (John v. 22, 27), because, though He was 'in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, yet He emptied Himself, taking upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men' (Phil. ii. 6, 7), yea, because, 'being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself' yet farther, 'becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him,' even in His human nature, and 'ordained Him,' as Man, to try the children of men, 'to be the Judge both of the quick and the dead'; both of those who shall be found alive at His coming, and of those who were before gathered to their fathers.

2. The time, termed by the prophet, 'the great and the terrible day,' is usually, in Scripture, styled *the day of the Lord*. The space from the creation of man upon the earth, to the end of all things, is *the day of the sons of men*; the time that is now passing over us is properly *our day*; when this is ended, *the day of the Lord* will begin. But who can say how long it will continue? 'With the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day' (2 Pet. iii.

II. 1. 'Outbeaming,' more exact than the A.V. 'brightness.' The Son is to the Father as the rays of light are to the sun.

'Thought it not robbery': better, 'thought it not an object to be grasped at' to be equal with God.

Helaid aside for the time His equality with the Father, which was therefore restored to Him when God gave Him the name that is above every name.

2. Pole quotes from Joseph Mede, 'Quod jam dixi diem judicii, non

8). And from this very expression, some of the ancient fathers drew that inference, that, what is commonly called the day of judgement would be indeed a thousand years : and it seems they did not go beyond the truth ; nay, probably they did not come up to it. For, if we consider the number of persons who are to be judged, and of actions which are to be inquired into, it does not appear that a thousand years will suffice for the transactions of that day ; so that it may not improbably comprise several thousand years. But God shall reveal this also in its season.

3. With regard to the place where mankind will be judged, we have no explicit account in Scripture. An eminent writer (but not he alone, many have been of the same opinion) supposes it will be on earth, where the works were done, according to which they shall be judged, and that God will, in order thereto, employ the angels of His strength—

To smooth and lengthen out the boundless space,  
And spread an area for all human race.

But perhaps it is more agreeable to our Lord's own account of His coming in the clouds, to suppose it will be above the earth, if not 'twice a planetary height.' And this supposition is not a little favoured by what St. Paul writes to the Thessalonians : 'The dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who remain alive shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air' (1 Thess. iv. 16, 17). So that it seems most probable, the great white throne will be high exalted above the earth.

intelligi velim de die brevi, sive paucarum horarum ; sed de spatio mille annorum quibus dies illa durabit,' i.e. 'The day of judgement is not to be understood as a short day of a few hours, but as the space of a thousand years, during which that day will last.'

3. The 'eminent writer' is Edward Young, the author of *Night Thoughts*. The quotation is from his poem, 'The

Last Day' (1713), ii. 19. The original runs :

To smooth and lengthen out *th'* unbounded space.

'Twice a planetary height.' Young, ii. 282, says :

Now the descending triumph stops its flight  
From earth full twice a planetary height.

Presumably he means twice as far from the earth as the farthest planet. All this seems rather solemn trifling.

4. The persons to be judged, who can count, any more than the drops of rain, or the sands of the sea? 'I beheld,' saith St. John, 'a great multitude which no man can number, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.' How immense then must be the total multitude of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues; of all that have sprung from the loins of Adam, since the world began, till time shall be no more! If we admit the common supposition, which seems no ways absurd, that the earth bears, at any one time, no less than four hundred millions of living souls, men, women, and children, what a congregation must all those generations make, who have succeeded each other for seven thousand years!

Great Xerxes' world in arms, proud Cannae's host,  
They all are here; and here they all are lost.  
Their numbers swell to be discern'd in vain;  
Lost as a drop in the unbounded main.

Every man, every woman, every infant of days, that ever breathed the vital air, will then hear the voice of the Son of God, and start into life, and appear before Him. And this seems to be the natural import of that expression, 'the dead, small and great' all universally, all without exception, all of every age, sex, or degree; all that ever lived and died, or underwent such a change as will be equivalent with death. For long before that day, the phantom of human greatness disappears, and sinks into nothing. Even in the moment of death, that vanishes away. Who is rich or great in the grave?

4. 'Four hundred millions'; it is now estimated as, more or less, fifteen hundred millions. But a few millions more or less are not worth considering in such an altogether indeterminate calculation as this.

The quotation is again from Young, ii. 193. Wesley protests vigorously against any one altering his own or his brother's verses; but he never

hesitates to do the same thing to other people's; the original passage in Young runs—

Great Xerxes' world in arms, proud Cannae's field,  
Where Carthage taught victorious Rome to yield,

Immortal Blenheim, fam'd Ramillia's host,  
They all are here, and here they all are lost;  
Their millions swell to be discern'd in vain,  
Lost as a billow in th' unbounded main.

5. And every man shall there 'give an account of his own works'; yea, a full and true account of all that he ever did while in the body, whether it was good or evil. O what a scene will then be disclosed, in the sight of angels and men!—while not the fabled Rhadamanthus, but the Lord God Almighty, who knoweth all things in heaven and in earth,—

*Castigatque, auditque dolos; subigitque fateri  
Quae quis apud superos, furto laetatus inani,  
Distulit in seram commissa piacula mortem.*

Nor will all the actions alone of every child of man be then brought to open view, but all their words; seeing 'every idle word which men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement' (Matt. xii. 36, 37); so that 'by thy words,' as well as works, 'thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.' Will not God then bring to light every circumstance also that accompanied every word or action, and if not altered the nature, yet lessened or increased the goodness or badness, of them? And how easy is this to Him who is 'about our bed, and about our path, and spieth out all our ways'! We know 'the darkness is no darkness to Him, but the night shineth as the day.'

6. Yea, He will bring to light, not the hidden works of darkness only, but the very thoughts and intents of the heart. And what marvel? For He 'searcheth the reins, and understandeth all our thoughts.' 'All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.' 'Hell and destruction are before Him without a covering. How much more the hearts of the children of men!'

7. And in that day shall be discovered every inward work-

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5. The quotation is from Virgil's *Aeneid*, vi. 567. The subject of the verbs is Rhadamanthus, the mythical judge of the dead. No translation is furnished in the 1771 edition. Modern editions give Dryden's version. The meaning is, 'Rhadamanthus of Gnosus here holds his iron

sway, and scourges them and hears their guile, and compels each man to confess the expiations put off till death (alas! too late!) which were due for the crimes he committed on earth, rejoicing in the vain hope that they might be concealed.'

ing of every human soul ; every appetite, passion, inclination, affection, with the various combinations of them, with every temper and disposition that constitute the whole complex character of each individual. So shall it be clearly and infallibly seen, who was righteous, and who unrighteous, and in what degree every action, or person, or character was either good or evil.

8. 'Then the King will say to them upon His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father. For I was hungry, and ye gave Me meat, thirsty, and ye gave Me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took Me in ; naked, and ye clothed Me.' In like manner, all the good they did upon earth will be recited before men and angels ; whatsoever they had done, either in word or deed, in the name, or for the sake, of the Lord Jesus. All their good desires, intentions, thoughts, all their holy dispositions, will also be then remembered, and it will appear, that though they were unknown or forgotten among men, yet God noted them in His book. All their sufferings likewise for the name of Jesus, and for the testimony of a good conscience, will be displayed unto their praise from the righteous Judge, their honour before saints and angels, and the increase of that 'far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

9. But will their evil deeds too (since, if we take in his whole life, there is not a man on earth who liveth and sinneth not), will these be remembered in that day, and mentioned in the great congregation ? Many believe they will not ; and ask, 'Would not this imply, that their sufferings were not at an end, even when life ended ?—seeing they would still have sorrow, and shame ; and confusion of face to endure.' They ask farther, 'How can this be reconciled with God's declaration by the Prophet, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all My statutes, and do that which is lawful and right ; all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be once mentioned unto him" ? (Ezek. xviii. 21, 22). How is it consistent with the promise which God has made to all who accept of the gospel covenant, "I will forgive their iniquities, and remember their sin no more" ? (Jer. xxxi. 34) : or, as the Apostle expresses it,

"I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" ? ' (Heb. viii. 12).

10. It may be answered, It is apparently and absolutely necessary, for the full display of the glory of God ; for the clear and perfect manifestation of His wisdom, justice, power, and mercy, toward the heirs of salvation ; that all the circumstances of their life should be placed in open view, together with all their tempers, and all the desires, thoughts, and intents of their hearts : otherwise, how would it appear out of what a depth of sin and misery the grace of God had delivered them ? And, indeed, if the whole lives of all the children of men were not manifestly discovered, the whole amazing contexture of divine providence could not be manifested ; nor should we yet be able, in a thousand instances, ' to justify the ways of God to man.' Unless our Lord's words were fulfilled in their utmost sense, without any restriction or limitation, ' There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; or hid, that shall not be known ' (Matt. x. 26) ; abundance of God's dispensations under the sun would still appear without their reasons. And then only when God hath brought to light all the hidden things of darkness, whosoever were the actors therein, will it be seen that wise and good were all His ways ; that He saw through the thick cloud, and governed all things by the wise counsel of His own will, that nothing was left to chance or the caprice of men, but God disposed all strongly and sweetly, and wrought all into one connected chain of justice, mercy, and truth.

11. And in the discovery of the divine perfections, the righteous will rejoice with joy unspeakable ; far from feeling any painful sorrow or shame, for any of those past transgressions which were long since blotted out as a cloud, washed away by the blood of the Lamb. It will be abundantly sufficient for them, that all the transgressions which they had committed shall not be once mentioned unto them to their disadvantage, that their sins, and transgressions, and iniquities shall be remembered no more to their condemnation. This is

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10. ' To justify the ways of God *Lost*, i. 26. In the original the last to man': from Milton's *Paradise* word in the line is ' men.'

the plain meaning of the promise, and this all the children of God shall find true, to their everlasting comfort.

12. After the righteous are judged, the King will turn to them upon His left hand; and they shall also be judged, every man according to his works. But not only their outward works will be brought into the account, but all the evil words which they have ever spoken; yea, all the evil desires, affections, tempers, which have, or have had, a place in their souls; and all the evil thoughts or designs which were ever cherished in their hearts. The joyful sentence of acquittal will then be pronounced upon those upon the right hand; the dreadful sentence of condemnation upon those on the left; both of which must remain fixed and unmovable as the throne of God.

III. 1. We may, in the third place, consider a few of the circumstances which will follow the general judgement. And the first is the execution of the sentence pronounced on the evil and on the good: 'These shall go away into eternal punishment, and the righteous into life eternal.' It should be observed, it is the very same word which is used, both in the former and the latter clause. It follows, that either the punishment lasts for ever, or the reward too will come to an end:—no, never, unless God could come to an end, or His mercy and truth could fail. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father,' 'and shall drink of those rivers of pleasure which are at God's right hand for evermore.' But here all description falls short; all human language fails! Only one who is caught up into the third heaven can have a just conception of it. But even such a one cannot express what he hath seen: these things it is not possible for man to utter.

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III. 1. 'The third heaven.' Paul (2 Cor. xii. 2) tells how he was caught up into the third heaven, or paradise, and heard unutterable words which it is not in the power of man to speak. It is doubtful whether he thought of three heavens only—viz. the heaven

of the atmosphere and clouds, the heaven of the sun and stars, and the heaven of the blessed dead—or accepted the Jewish belief in seven heavens, of which Paradise was the third in order from below.

Wesley admits of no hope for the

The wicked, meantime, shall be turned into hell, even all the people that forget God. They will be 'punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.' They will be 'cast into the lake of fire burning with brimstone,' originally 'prepared for the devil and his angels'; where they will gnaw their tongues for anguish and pain, they will curse God and look upward. There the dogs of hell—pride, malice, revenge, rage, horror, despair—continually devour them. There 'they have no rest, day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth for ever and ever'! For 'their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'

2. Then the heavens will be shrivelled up as a parchment scroll, and pass away with a great noise they will 'flee from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and there will be found no place for them' (Rev. xx. 11). The very manner of their passing away is disclosed to us by the Apostle Peter: 'In the day of God, the heavens, being on fire, shall be dissolved' (2 Pet. iii. 12). The whole beautiful fabric will be overthrown by that raging element, the connexion of all its parts destroyed, and every atom torn asunder from the others. By the same, 'the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up' (verse 10). The enormous works of nature, the everlasting hills, mountains that have defied the rage of time, and stood unmoved so many thousand years, will sink down in fiery ruin. How much less will the works of art, though of the most durable kind, the utmost efforts of

finally impenitent, and he interprets literally these passages which speak of their doom. In the first, however, Hell is Sheol, and all that the Psalmist says is that all the nations (not the people) that forget God will depart into the world of the dead. In the Sermon LXXIII, on Hell, he is quite explicit as to his belief in the endless torment of the wicked in material fire. Neither of these sermons are, however, part of the standard of Methodist doctrine.

2. The final destruction of the earth by means of fire is quite within the bounds of possibility. The impact of some wandering star would generate heat enough for the purpose; or it may be that gravitation will at last overcome the centrifugal force and the earth will fall into the sun. But such speculations are as fruitless as they are uncertain; and the idea in the next paragraph of the origin of the sea of glass is merely grotesque.

human industry—tombs, pillars, triumphal arches, castles, pyramids—be able to withstand the flaming conqueror! All, all will die, perish, vanish away, like a dream when one awaketh!

3. It has indeed been imagined by some great and good men, that as it requires that same almighty power to annihilate things as to create; to speak into nothing or out of nothing, so no part of, no atom in, the universe, will be totally or finally destroyed. Rather, they suppose that, as the last operation of fire, which we have yet been able to observe, is to reduce into glass what, by a smaller force, it had reduced to ashes, so, in the day God hath ordained, the whole earth, if not the material heavens also, will undergo this change, after which the fire can have no farther power over them. And they believe this is intimated by that expression in the Revelation made to St. John: 'Before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal' (Rev. iv. 6). We cannot now either affirm or deny this; but we shall know hereafter.

4. If it be inquired by the scoffers, the minute philosophers, 'How can these things be? Whence should come such an immense quantity of fire as would consume the heavens and the whole terraqueous globe?' we would beg leave, first, to remind them, that this difficulty is not peculiar to the Christian system. The same opinion almost universally obtained among the *unbigoted* Heathens. So one of these

4. Cicero is the author of the phrase 'minute philosophers.' He speaks in *De Senect.* xxiii, of 'Quidam minuti philosophi,' meaning trifling, insignificant. In English use it rather means meticulous, over-precise, speculators. All this discussion as to quantity of fire is absurd: fire is not a thing, but a state of violent chemical combination; a match is quite enough to kindle a conflagration if there be fuel enough. Wesley was keenly interested in electrical phenomena, and was the first man in England to make use of it as a

curative agent. His pamphlet called *The Desideratum; or, Electricity made Plain, and Useful*, published in 1760, details many of Franklin's experiments, such as drawing sparks out of the human body or from the fur of a cat. This is what he is thinking of when he says that our bodies are full of fire.

'Freethinker' was a name claimed by the Deists and other rejecters of the Christian revelation at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Here Wesley uses it of Ovid, the Roman poet, with a kind of sugges-

celebrated *freethinkers* speaks, according to the generally received sentiment,—

*Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, affore tempus,  
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia coeli  
Ardeat, et mundi moles operosa labore.*

But, secondly, it is easy to answer, even from our slight and superficial acquaintance with natural things, that there are abundant magazines of fire ready prepared, and treasured up against the day of the Lord. How soon may a comet, commissioned by Him, travel down from the most distant parts of the universe ! And were it to fix upon the earth in its return from the sun, when it is some thousand times hotter than a red-hot cannon ball, who does not see what must be the immediate consequence ? But, not to ascend so high as the ethereal heavens, might not the same lightnings which ‘give shine to the world,’ if commanded by the Lord of nature, give ruin and utter destruction ? Or, to go no farther than the globe itself ; who knows what huge reservoirs of liquid fire are from age to age contained in the bowels of the earth ? Aetna, Hecla, Vesuvius, and all the other volcanoes that belch out flames and coals of fire, what are they, but so many proofs and mouths of those fiery furnaces ; and at the same time so many evidences that God hath in readiness wherewith to fulfil His word ? Yea, were we to observe no more than the surface of the earth, and the things that surround us on every side, it is most certain (as a thousand experiments prove, beyond all possibility of denial) that we ourselves, our whole bodies, are full of fire, as well as everything round about us. Is it not easy to make this ethereal fire visible even to the naked eye, and to produce thereby the very same effects on combustible matter, which are produced by culinary fire ? Needs there

tion that the modern freethinkers were akin to him in their religious views. The quotation is from the *Metamorphoses*, i. 256, where Jupiter, preparing to hurl his thunderbolts, hesitates to do so lest he should set the ether aflame, ‘for he remembers

that it is amongst the decrees of the Fates that a time will come when the sea, the earth, and the palace of heaven shall catch fire and blaze, and the mass of the world, so laboriously constructed, shall be imperilled.’

then any more than for God to unloose that secret chain, whereby this irresistible agent is now bound down, and lies quiescent in every particle of matter? And how soon would it tear the universal frame in pieces, and involve all in one common ruin!

5. There is one circumstance more which will follow the judgement, that deserves our serious consideration: 'We look,' says the Apostle, 'according to His promise, for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (2 Pet. iii. 13). The promise stands in the prophecy of Isaiah 'Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered' (Isa. lxv. 17), so great shall the glory of the latter be! These St. John did behold in the visions of God. 'I saw,' saith he, 'a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away' (Rev. xxi. 1). And only righteousness dwelt therein: accordingly, he adds, 'And I heard a great voice from' the third 'heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God' (xxi. 3). Of necessity, therefore, they will all be happy: 'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain' (xxi. 4). 'There shall be no more curse, but they shall see His face' (xxii. 3, 4),—shall have the nearest access to, and thence the highest, resemblance of, Him. This is the strongest expression in the language of Scripture, to denote the most perfect happiness. 'And His name shall be on their foreheads'; they shall be openly acknowledged as God's own property, and His glorious nature shall most visibly shine forth in them. 'And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.'

IV. It remains only to apply the preceding considerations to all who are here before God. And are we not directly led so to do, by the present solemnity, which so naturally points

us to that day, when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness? This, therefore, by reminding us of that more awful season, may furnish many lessons of instruction. A few of these I may be permitted just to touch on. May God write them on all our hearts!

1. And, first, how beautiful are the feet of those who are sent by the wise and gracious providence of God, to execute justice on earth, to defend the injured, and punish the wrong-doer! Are they not the ministers of God to us for good, the grand supporters of the public tranquillity, the patrons of innocence and virtue, the great security of all our temporal blessings? And does not every one of these represent, not only an earthly prince, but the Judge of the earth? Him whose 'name is written upon His thigh, King of kings, and Lord of lords'? O that all these sons of the right hand of the Most High may be as holy as He is holy! wise with the wisdom that sitteth by His throne, like Him who is the eternal Wisdom of the Father! no respecters of persons, as He is none, but rendering to every man according to his works; like Him inflexibly, inexorably just, though pitiful and of tender mercy! So shall they be terrible indeed to them that do evil, as not bearing the sword in vain. So shall the laws of our land have their full use and due honour, and the throne of our King be still established in righteousness.

2. Ye truly honourable men, whom God and the King have commissioned, in a lower degree, to administer justice; may not ye be compared to those ministering spirits who will attend the Judge coming in the clouds? May you, like them, burn with love to God and man! May you love righteousness and hate iniquity! May ye all minister, in your several spheres (such honour hath God given you also!) to them that shall be heirs of salvation, and to the glory of your great sovereign! May ye remain the establishers of peace, the blessing and ornaments of your country, the protectors of a guilty land, the guardian angels of all that are round about you!

3. You, whose office it is to execute what is given you in charge by him before whom you stand; how nearly are you concerned to resemble those that stand before the face of the

Son of Man, those servants of His that do His pleasure, and hearken to the voice of His words ! Does it not highly import you, to be as uncorrupt as them ? to approve yourselves the servants of God ? to do justly, and love mercy ? to do to all as ye would they should do to you ? So shall that great Judge, under whose eye you continually stand, say to you also, ' Well done, good and faithful servants : enter ye into the joy of your Lord ! '

4. Suffer me to add a few words to all of you who are at this day present before the Lord. Should not you bear it in your minds all the day long, that a more awful day is coming ? A large assembly this ! But what is it to that which every eye will then behold, the general assembly of all the children of men that ever lived on the face of the whole earth ? A few will stand at the judgement-seat this day, to be judged touching what shall be laid to their charge ; and they are now reserved in prison, perhaps in chains, till they are brought forth to be tried and sentenced. But we shall all, I that speak and you that hear, ' stand at the judgement-seat of Christ.' And we are now reserved on this earth, which is not our home, in this prison of flesh and blood, perhaps many of us in chains of darkness too, till we are ordered to be brought forth. Here a man is questioned concerning one or two facts, which he is supposed to have committed : there we are to give an account of all our works, from the cradle to the grave, of all our words ; of all our desires and tempers, all the thoughts and intents of our hearts ; of all the use we have made of our various talents, whether of mind, body, or fortune, till God said, ' Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' In this court, it is possible, some who are guilty may escape for want of evidence ; but there is no want of evidence in that court. All men, with whom you had the most secret intercourse, who were privy to all your designs and actions, are ready before your face. So are all the spirits of darkness, who inspired evil designs and assisted in the execution of them. So are all the angels of God ; those eyes of the Lord, that run to and fro over all the earth, who watched over your soul, and laboured for your good, so far

as you would permit. So is your own conscience, a thousand witnesses in one, now no more capable of being either blinded or silenced, but constrained to know and to speak the naked truth, touching all your thoughts, and words, and actions. And is conscience as a thousand witnesses?—yea, but God is as a thousand consciences! O, who can stand before the face of the great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ!

See! See! He cometh! He maketh the clouds His chariots! He rideth upon the wings of the wind! A devouring fire goeth before Him, and after Him a flame burneth! See! He sitteth upon His throne, clothed with light as with a garment, arrayed with majesty and honour! Behold, His eyes are as a flame of fire, His voice as the sound of many waters!

How will ye escape? Will ye call to the mountains to fall on you, the rocks to cover you? Alas, the mountains themselves, the rocks, the earth, the heavens, are just ready to flee away! Can ye prevent the sentence? Wherewith? With all the substance of thy house, with thousands of gold and silver? Blind wretch! Thou camest naked from thy mother's womb, and more naked into eternity. Hear the Lord, the Judge! 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' Joyful sound! How widely different from that voice which echoes through the expanse of heaven, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!' And who is he that can prevent or retard the full execution of either sentence? Vain hope! Lo, hell is moved from beneath to receive those who are ripe for destruction. And the everlasting doors lift up their heads, that the heirs of glory may come in!

5. 'What manner of persons then ought we to be, in all

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IV 4. 'Your own conscience;' so the author of the old Kentish *Poema Morale* says:

Elch man sceal him then biclupien and ech sceal  
him demen;

His aye weorc and his ithanc to witnesse he  
sceal temen,

which is, being interpreted,

Every man shall accuse himself there, and every  
man shall judge himself;  
His own work and his conscience he shall bring  
to witness.

'See! See! He cometh!' One of  
Wesley's finest and most impassioned  
perorations.

holy conversation and godliness?' We know it cannot be long before the Lord will descend with the voice of the archangel, and the trumpet of God; when every one of us shall appear before Him, and give account of his own works. 'Wherefore, beloved, seeing ye look for these things,' seeing ye know He will come and will not tarry, 'be diligent, that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless.' Why should ye not? Why should one of you be found on the left hand at His appearing? He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; by repentance, to faith in a bleeding Lord; by faith, to spotless love, to the full image of God renewed in the heart, and producing all holiness of conversation. Can you doubt of this, when you remember, the Judge of all is likewise the Saviour of all? Hath He not bought you with His own blood, that ye might not perish, but have everlasting life? O make proof of His mercy, rather than His justice, of His love, rather than the thunder of His power! He is not far from every one of us, and He is now come, not to condemn, but to save the world. He standeth in the midst! Sinner, doth He not now, even now, knock at the door of thy heart? O that thou mayest know, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! O that ye may now give yourselves to Him who gave Himself for you, in humble faith, in holy, active, patient love! So shall ye rejoice with exceeding joy in His day, when He cometh in the clouds of heaven.

## SERMON XLIX

### THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL IN WEST STREET, SEVEN DIALS,  
ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1765

WEST STREET, SOHO, runs north-west from St. Martin's Lane, a little to the south of Seven Dials, to Shaftesbury Avenue, which it strikes just east of Cambridge Circus. On the north-east side of the street is a brick building with four large arched windows, and a door at each end. This is the old West Street Chapel, where this sermon was preached. Next door to it is the Chapel-house, a plain three-storey dwelling. A photograph of it will be found in the Standard edition of the *Journal*, iii. 497. It was originally built about 1680 for the French Protestants of Soho, and was known as La Tremblade. In 1728 it was bought by the parish of St. Clement Danes, and in 1743 was offered to John Wesley, probably by the Rev. Thomas Blackwell, the rector of the parish. It was opened by Wesley on Trinity Sunday, May 29, 1743; he preached on part of John iii, the Gospel for the day, and administered the Lord's Supper to some hundreds of communicants, the service lasting from 10 to 3. The chalices used on this occasion had been presented to the French congregation in 1703 by Peter Fenowillet, and were afterwards in use at Great Queen Street Chapel. In the afternoon he preached on 'Ye must be born again' to 'an immense congregation' at the Great Gardens, Whitechapel; and in the evening met the leaders and the Bands. 'At ten at night,' he says, 'I was less weary than at six in the morning.' It was the second Methodist preaching-house in London; the first being the Foundery near the present site of Wesley's Chapel in City Road, where Wesley began to preach in 1739. See Telford's *Two West-End Chapels*.

On Sunday, November 24, 1765, the *Journal* records: 'I preached on those words in the Lesson for the day "The Lord our Righteousness." I said not one thing which I have not said at least fifty times within this twelve-month; yet it appeared to many entirely new, who much importuned me to print my sermon, supposing it would stop the mouths of all gainsayers. Alas, for their simplicity! In spite of all I can print, say, or do, will not those who seek occasion of

offence find occasion ?' John Valton in his Journal for October 24 writes: ' Mr. Wesley arrived in perfect health, just in time to step into the pulpit and preach on Ps. lxxxii. 10.' This was at the Foundery, and the sermon was a reply to the phrase ' The imputed righteousness of Christ ' in Hervey's *Eleven Letters*. It was doubtless substantially the present sermon, which was published separately in 1766, and passed through five editions before it was placed as No. XX in the edition of the sermons of 1771.

The Rev. James Hervey entered Lincoln College, Oxford, in 1731, when he was only seventeen; and two years later he joined the little company of the Methodists. In 1736 he became curate to Charles Kinchin at the quaint little church at Dummer (see *W.H.S. Proceedings*, xii. 39). After some interruption from enfeebled health, he ultimately became his father's curate at Weston Favel, near Northampton; where he remained until his death in 1758. His *Meditations among the Tombs*, published in 1746, achieved great popularity as a devotional book. But his most important work was the series of dialogues and letters entitled *Theron and Aspasio*, published in 1755. He had become very friendly with Whitefield and had embraced the Calvinist view of predestination and the perseverance of the saints; but this did not prevent him from submitting his *Theron and Aspasio* to John Wesley for criticism before its publication. Its main subject was the Imputed Righteousness of Christ; and whilst Wesley speaks in the warmest terms of much of the teaching of the dialogues, he animadverts rather brusquely on the phrase ' the imputed righteousness of Christ,' which, he rightly says, is unscriptural; and on the tendency of the doctrine towards Antinomianism: if Christ's righteousness is imputed to us, why should we try to supplement it by good works of our own? Hervey himself protests against this perversion of his teaching; but there is no doubt that it is liable to such a misunderstanding, and was, as a matter of fact, used as an argument by the Antinomians who were giving Wesley so much anxiety in his societies. So far Wesley's criticisms were just; but he also assumed, which was not the case, that Hervey believed in reprobation, and attacked not quite fairly some of his statements on that ground. Hervey was already a very sick man, and naturally was grieved with his old friend's blunt remarks; so he made no reply to him. But in the early part of 1758 he began writing a reply to Wesley's strictures, although they had not been published and were merely notes written at his own request. Wesley heard of this, and in self-defence published his remarks in a pamphlet entitled *A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion* in June 1758. Hervey, though he was a dying man, attempted to write a series of letters in reply; and submitted them for revision to William Cudworth, the minister of the Independent Chapel in Margaret Street, London, who was at bitter enmity

with Wesley. Wesley wrote to him in November, begging him to have nothing to do with Cudworth, whose work he describes as an 'insolent, scurrilous, virulent libel'; and in December, the day before he died, Hervey desired his brother not to publish the letters, as he had not been able to revise more than half of them. But some one (probably Cudworth) issued them from the press surreptitiously in 1764, and in the next year Hervey's brother printed an authentic edition entitled *Eleven Letters from the Late Rev. Mr. Hervey to the Rev. Mr. John Wesley*, on the ground that the other edition was faulty and incorrect, and that Wesley was still publishing his criticism of *Theron and Aspasio*. It was this publication that occasioned Wesley's sermon. He had already, in the preface to his *Treatise on Justification*, dated November 16, 1764, answered the charges made in the earlier edition of the *Eleven Letters*, and he there states his conviction that they do not express the 'tender, loving, grateful spirit' of Hervey; 'No,' he says, 'the hand of Joab is in all this. I acknowledge the hand, the heart, of William Cudworth.' The whole business is lamentable; and it is easy to see how mistakes were made on both sides. The first three paragraphs of the sermon show how deeply Wesley regretted it, and his remarks in par. 3 go to the root of the matter. It was a misunderstanding by each of these good men of the views of the other; and when the fire of controversy was once kindled, each of them said things of the other that cooler reflection would have condemned.

The text was taken from the lesson for the day; but was probably suggested by a passage in *Theron and Aspasio*, dial. vi, 'What other righteousness, then, can be meant, but the righteousness of our great Substitute, Surety, and Saviour, who took our nature, discharged our debt, and is therefore styled "Jehovah our righteousness"?'

The *locus classicus* on which this whole controversy about imputed righteousness turns is Rom. iv. 1-12. Now, no one can fail to observe that neither here nor anywhere else in the Scriptures is it said that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer. It is the believer's faith that is imputed to him for righteousness. Moreover, it would save us from a good deal of needless difficulty if we got rid altogether of the word 'imputed,' which has acquired a technical, theological flavour, and substituted for it what the Greek word means — 'reckoned' or 'accounted.' Man is unrighteous; but if he believes on Christ, his faith is accounted or credited to him as equivalent for this purpose to righteousness; and so, though he is ungodly, God justifies him. His faith is in Christ, who by His perfect righteousness both in doing and suffering the will of God, His active and passive righteousness, has made satisfaction for our sins; and as long as it is understood that this is what is meant by the imputed righteousness of Christ, we may agree with Wesley not to quarrel about the phrase, though it is very liable to lead to error both of faith and practice.

Error has developed in three main directions. First, the Roman Church, in its anxiety to avoid Antinomianism, taught that good works are a meritorious cause of justification, and that merit can even be accumulated by works of supererogation; so that, in effect, the righteousness of Christ needs to be supplemented by our own righteousness, if we are to be saved. Second, the Mystics, laying all the stress upon the work of Christ *within* the believer, tended to minimize the importance of His work done *for* the believer by His perfect life and atoning death; and by the emphasis they attached to the inward experience of ecstatic fellowship with God, undervalued, even if they did not denounce, all outward good works and means of grace. Third, the Antinomians, going to the other extreme, so magnified the importance of the imputed righteousness of Christ that they denied the necessity of any good works at all. Christ had done all, therefore we need do nothing; indeed, the performance of good works was a kind of slur on the absolute sufficiency of the work of Christ. When this notion was associated with the vulgar type of Calvinism, which taught that the elect were saved, do what they would, and the non-elect damned, do what they could, it is plain that there was little motive left for the practice of good works, and the flood-gates were opened to all sorts of self-indulgence. As par. 19 declares, this was the result which Wesley feared from Hervey's teaching; so that we can easily understand his attack upon it. He honestly tries to conciliate his opponents by consenting to use the phrase which they approved—imputed righteousness; but in his *Remarks on Hill's Farrago Double-distilled* (1773) he gives his real and final judgement on the question: 'The thing, that we are justified merely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered, I have constantly and earnestly maintained above four-and-thirty years. And I have frequently used the phrase, hoping thereby to please others for their good to edification. But it has had a contrary effect since so many improve it into an objection. Therefore I will use it no more. I mean the phrase *imputed righteousness*; that phrase, *the imputed righteousness of Christ*, I never did use'; and he advises all his brethren to lay it aside as ambiguous and unscriptural and liable to be misinterpreted.

This sermon was highly valued by Wesley, and in *Minutes*, 1766, he directs each of the Assistants to have it, and also Sermons XXXVI, XXXVIII, and L, carefully dispersed.

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*This is His name whereby He shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.*—JER. xxiii. 6.

1. How dreadful and how innumerable are the contests which have arisen about religion! And not only among the children

of this world, among those who knew not what true religion was, but even among the children of God ; those who had experienced ' the kingdom of God within them ' ; who had tasted of ' righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' How many of these, in all ages, instead of joining together against the common enemy, have turned their weapons against each other, and so not only wasted their precious time, but hurt one another's spirits, weakened each other's hands, and so hindered the great work of their common Master ! How many of the weak have hereby been offended ! How many of the lame turned out of the way ! How many sinners confirmed in their disregard of all religion, and their contempt of those that profess it ! And how many of ' the excellent ones upon earth ' have been constrained to ' weep in secret places ' !

2. What would not every lover of God and his neighbour do, what would he not suffer, to remedy this sore evil ; to remove contention from the children of God ; to restore or preserve peace among them ? What but a good conscience would he think too dear to part with, in order to promote this valuable end ? And suppose we cannot ' make ' these ' wars to cease in all the world,' suppose we cannot reconcile all the children of God to each other, however, let each do what he can, let him contribute, if it be but two mites, toward it. Happy are they who are able, in any degree, to promote ' peace and good-will among men ' ; especially among good men ; among those that are all listed under the banner of ' the Prince of peace,' and are therefore peculiarly engaged, ' as much as lies in them,' to ' live peaceably with all men.'

3. It would be a considerable step towards this glorious end, if we could bring good men to understand one another. Abundance of disputes arise purely from the want of this : from mere misapprehension. Frequently neither of the contending parties understands what his opponent means ; whence it follows, that each violently attacks the other, while there is no real difference between them. And yet it is not always an easy matter to convince them of this, particularly when their passions are moved : it is then attended with the utmost

difficulty. However, it is not impossible ; especially when we attempt it, not trusting in ourselves, but having all our dependence upon Him with whom all things are possible. How soon is He able to disperse the cloud, to shine upon their hearts, and to enable them both to understand each other, and ' the truth as it is in Jesus ' !

4. One very considerable article of this truth is contained in the words above recited, ' This is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS ' ; a truth this, which enters deep into the nature of Christianity, and, in a manner, supports the whole frame of it. Of this undoubtedly, may be affirmed, what Luther affirms of a truth closely connected with it ; it is *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* the Christian Church stands or falls with it. It is certainly the pillar and ground of that faith, of which alone cometh salvation ; of that catholic or universal faith which is found in all the children of God, and which ' unless a man keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly.'

5. Might not one, therefore, reasonably expect that, however they differed in others, all those who name the name of Christ should agree in this point ? But how far is this from being the case ! There is scarce any wherein they are so

Par. 4. Hill, in his *Review of Wesley's Doctrines*, sets over against this paragraph a passage from the *Journal*, December 1, 1767 : ' A pious Churchman who has not clear conceptions of justification by faith may be saved. . . A Mystic who denies justification by faith (Mr. Law, for instance) may be saved. But if so, what becomes of *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae* ? ' Wesley, in his *Remarks on Hill's Review*, XI (1772), explains : ' It is certain here is a seeming contradiction ; but it is not a real one. For the two opposite propositions do not speak of the same thing. The latter speaks of justification by faith ; the former, of trusting in the righteousness or merits of Christ ; justification by

faith is only mentioned incidentally in a parenthesis. Now, although Mr. Law denied justification by faith, he might trust in the merits of Christ. It is this, and this only, that I affirm (whatever Luther does) to be *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiae*.' In other words, it is not a man's attitude towards the dogmatic statement of justification by faith, but his personal trust in Christ's merits, that really matters.

The last sentence is from the opening of the Athanasian Creed ; but Wesley diverts it from its original meaning, which has reference to the dogmatic statements of the Creed throughout, and not only to the article ' Who suffered for our salvation.'

little agreed ; wherein those who all profess to follow Christ, seem so widely and irreconcilably to differ. I say *seem* ; because I am thoroughly convinced, that many of them *only seem* to differ. The disagreement is more in words than in sentiments : they are much nearer in judgement than in language. And a wide difference in language there certainly is, not only between Protestants and Papists, but between Protestant and Protestant ; yea, even between those who all believe justification by faith ; who agree, as well in this, as in every other fundamental doctrine of the gospel.

6. But if the difference be more in *opinion* than real *experience*, and more in *expression* than in *opinion*, how can it be, that even the children of God should so vehemently contend with each other on the point ? Several reasons may be assigned for this : the chief is, their not understanding one another, joined with too keen an attachment to their opinions and particular modes of expression.

In order to remove this, at least in some measure, in order to our understanding one another on this head, I shall, by the help of God, endeavour to show,

I. WHAT IS THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST :

II. WHEN, AND IN WHAT SENSE, IT IS IMPUTED TO US :

And conclude with a short and plain application.

And, I. What is the righteousness of Christ ? It is two-fold, either His divine or His human righteousness.

1. His divine righteousness belongs to His divine nature, as He is 'O  $\omega$ ν. He that existeth 'over all, God blessed for ever' ; the Supreme ; the Eternal ; 'equal with the Father as touching His Godhead, though inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.' Now this is His eternal, essential,

I. 1. The modern editions misprint the first sentence ; in the 1771 edition it reads : 'He is 'O  $\omega$ ν. He that existeth, over all, God, blessed for ever'—a quotation from Rom. ix. 5. There has been much discussion of the punctuation of the passage ; Wesley adopts that which makes the

last clause refer to our Lord, and this is supported by the R.V. Sanday and Headlam, after a full account of the various renderings, accept this one, 'with some slight, but only slight, hesitation' (*Com. on Romans*, p. 238).

immutable holiness , His infinite justice, mercy, and truth , in all which, He and the Father are one.

But I do not apprehend that the divine righteousness of Christ is immediately concerned in the present question. I believe few, if any, do now contend for the imputation of this righteousness to us. Whoever believes the doctrine of imputation, understands it chiefly, if not solely, of His human righteousness.

2. The human righteousness of Christ belongs to Him in His human nature , as He is the ' Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.' This is either internal or external. His internal righteousness is the image of God, stamped on every power and faculty of His soul. It is a copy of His divine righteousness, so far as it can be imparted to a human spirit. It is a transcript of the divine purity, the divine justice, mercy, and truth. It includes love, reverence, resignation to His Father , humility, meekness, gentleness ; love to lost mankind, and every other holy and heavenly temper ; and all these in the highest degree, without any defect, or mixture of unholiness.

3. It was the least part of His external righteousness, that He did nothing amiss , that He knew no outward sin of any kind, neither was ' guile found in His mouth ' ; that He never spoke one improper word, nor did one improper action. Thus far it is only a negative righteousness, though such a one as never did, nor ever can, belong to any one that is born of a woman, save Himself alone. But even His outward righteousness was positive too : He did all things well ; in every word of His tongue, in every work of His hands, He did precisely the ' will of Him that sent Him.' In the whole course of His life, He did the will of God on earth, as the angels do it in heaven. All He acted and spoke was exactly right in every circumstance. The whole and every part of His obedience was complete. ' He fulfilled all righteousness.'

4. But His obedience implied more than all this : it implied not only doing, but suffering , suffering the whole will of God, from the time He came into the world, till ' He bore our sins in His own body upon the tree ' ; yea, till having made a full

atonement for them, 'He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.' This is usually termed the *passive* righteousness of Christ, the former, His *active* righteousness. But as the active and passive righteousness of Christ were never, in fact, separated from each other, so we never need separate them at all, either in speaking or even in thinking. And it is with regard to both these conjointly, that Jesus is called 'the Lord our Righteousness.'

II. But when is it that any of us may truly say, 'The Lord *our* Righteousness'? In other words, when is it that the righteousness of Christ is *imputed* to us, and in what sense is it imputed?

1. Look through all the world, and all the men therein are either believers or unbelievers. The first thing, then, which admits of no dispute among reasonable men is this: to all believers the righteousness of Christ is imputed; to unbelievers it is not.

But when is it imputed? When they believe: in that very hour the righteousness of Christ is theirs. It is imputed to every one that believes, as soon as he believes: faith and the righteousness of Christ are inseparable. For if he believes according to Scripture, he believes in the righteousness of Christ. There is no true faith, that is, justifying faith, which hath not the righteousness of Christ for its object.

2. It is true, believers may not all speak alike; they may not all use the same language. It is not to be expected that they should: we cannot reasonably require it of them. A

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4. Hervey, *Theron and Aspasio*, dial. ii, says just the same thing: 'I never consider the active or the passive righteousness in the exclusive sense; but would always have them understood as a grand and glorious aggregate. To divide them into detached portions, independent of each other, seems to be fanciful rather than judicious.' Some of the Lutheran divines taught that the non-imputation of guilt was due to

the passive, and the imputation of righteousness to the active, obedience of Christ.

II. 1. It is dangerous to say that the believer 'believes in the righteousness of Christ.' Christ Himself, not His righteousness, is the object of Faith. It would be truer to say, 'The believer believes in Jesus Christ the Righteous.'

2, 3. How wise and true are these reflections, and how many disputes

thousand circumstances may cause them to vary from each other, in the manner of expressing themselves ; but a difference of expression does not necessarily imply a difference of sentiment. Different persons may use different expressions, and yet mean the same thing. Nothing is more common than this, although we seldom make sufficient allowance for it. Nay, it is not easy for the same persons, when they speak of the same thing at a considerable distance of time, to use exactly the same expressions, even though they retain the same sentiments : how then can we be rigorous in requiring others to use just the same expressions with us ?

3. We may go a step farther yet : men may differ from us in their opinions, as well as their expressions, and nevertheless be partakers with us of the same precious faith. It is possible they may not have a distinct apprehension of the very blessing which they enjoy. Their ideas may not be so clear, and yet their experience may be as sound, as ours. There is a wide difference between the natural faculties of men, their understandings in particular ; and that difference is exceedingly increased by the manner of their education. Indeed, this alone may occasion an inconceivable difference in their opinions of various kinds and why not upon this head, as well as on any other ? But still, though their opinions, as well as expressions, may be confused and inaccurate, their hearts may cleave to God, through the Son of His love, and be truly interested in His righteousness.

4. Let us then make all that allowance to others, which, were we in their place, we would desire for ourselves. Who is ignorant (to touch again on that circumstance only) of the amazing power of education ? And who that knows it, can expect, suppose, a member of the Church of Rome, either to think or speak clearly on this subject ? And yet, if we had heard even dying Bellarmine cry out, when he was

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would be avoided if we always remembered them !

4. Cardinal Bellarmine (1542-1621), one of the greatest theologians of the Roman Church, and a man of

blameless, ascetic life. He altogether denied the imputation of Christ's righteousness, and taught that 'good works are necessary to salvation, not only in regard to their

asked, 'Unto which of the saints wilt thou turn?'—*Fidere meritis Christi tutissimum* ('It is safest to trust in the merits of Christ'), would we have affirmed that, notwithstanding his wrong opinions, he had no share in His righteousness?

5. But in what sense is this righteousness imputed to believers? In this: all believers are forgiven and accepted, not for the sake of anything in them, or of anything that ever was, that is, or ever can be done by them, but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for them. I say again, not for the sake of anything in them, or done by them, of their own righteousness or works: 'Not for works of righteousness which we have done, but of His own mercy He saved us.' 'By grace ye are saved through faith; . . . not of works, lest any man should boast', but wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered for us. We are 'justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ.' And this is not only the means of our obtaining the favour of God, but of our continuing therein. It is thus we come to God at first; it is by the same we come unto Him ever after. We walk in one and the same new and living way, till our spirit returns to God.

6. And this is the doctrine which I have constantly believed and taught, for near eight-and-twenty years. This I published to all the world in the year 1738, and ten or twelve times since, in those words, and many others to the same effect, extracted from the Homilies of our Church: 'These things must necessarily go together in our justification: upon God's part, His

presence, but also in regard to their efficacy.' Yet in his work *De Justificatione*, v. 7, he says, 'It is safest to repose our whole trust in the mercy and goodness of God alone.'

6. In November 1738 Wesley says, 'I began more narrowly to inquire what the doctrine of the Church of England is, concerning the much controverted point of justification by faith; and the sum of what I found in the Homilies, I extracted and printed for the use of others.' It was published in 1739 by James Hutton under the title *The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith, and Good Works, extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England*. The eleventh edition is dated 1762. The first extract here quoted is from the first part of the Homily on Salvation; the second is in the same Homily, a few sentences later. Both are somewhat abbreviated.

great mercy and grace ; upon Christ's part, the satisfaction of God's justice ; and on our part, faith in the merits of Christ. So that the grace of God doth not shut out the righteousness of God in our justification, but only shutteth out the righteousness of man, as to *deserving* our justification.' 'That we are justified by faith alone, is spoken to take away clearly all merit of our works, and wholly to ascribe the *merit* and *deserving* of our justification to Christ only. Our justification comes freely of the mere mercy of God. For whereas all the world was not able to pay any part toward our ransom, it pleased Him, without any of our deserving, to prepare for us Christ's body and blood, whereby our ransom might be paid, and His justice satisfied. Christ, therefore, is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in Him.'

7. The Hymns published a year or two after this, and since republished several times (a clear testimony that my judgement was still the same), speak full to the same purpose. To cite all the passages to this effect, would be to transcribe a great part of the volumes. Take one for all, which was reprinted seven years ago, five years ago, two years ago, and some months since,—

Jesu, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress :  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these array'd,  
With joy shall I lift up my head.

The whole hymn expresses the same sentiment, from the beginning to the end.

7. Wesley published his *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1739, and a second volume in 1740. The two were incorporated in subsequent editions. It was in the 1740 volume that John Wesley's translation of Zinzendorf's hymn, here quoted, first appeared, under the title of 'The Believer's Triumph.' The original, entitled 'Christi Blut und Gerechtigkeit,' was written by Zinzendorf in 1739 on his voyage from St.

Thomas in the West Indies ; the first four lines being taken from a hymn of Paul Eber, first published in 1638 and beginning 'In Christi Wunden schlaf ich ein.' Eber was a close friend of Melancthon and Luther, so that this noble hymn goes right back to the days of the Reformation. Wesley cut down Zinzendorf's twenty-eight verses to twenty-four ; and his hymn was further reduced to eleven verses in

8. In the Sermon on Justification, published nineteen, and again seven or eight years ago, I express the same thing in these words: 'In consideration of this, that the Son of God hath "tasted death for every man," God hath now "reconciled the world unto Himself, not imputing to them their" former "trespasses." So that, for the sake of His well-beloved Son, of what He hath done and suffered for us, God now vouchsafes, on one only condition (which Himself also enables us to perform), both to remit the punishment due to our sins, to reinstate us in His favour, and to restore our dead souls to spiritual life, as the earnest of life eternal.'

9. This is more largely and particularly expressed in the Treatise on Justification, which I published last year: 'If we take the phrase of imputing Christ's righteousness, for the bestowing (as it were) the righteousness of Christ, including His obedience, as well passive as active, in the return of it, that is, in the privileges, blessings, and benefits purchased by it; so a believer may be said to be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed. The meaning is, God justifies the believer for the sake of Christ's righteousness, and not for any righteousness of his own. So Calvin (*Institut.*, l. 2, c. 17): "Christ, by His obedience, procured and merited for us grace or favour with God the Father." Again: "Christ, by His obedience, procured or purchased righteousness for us." And yet

the Methodist Hymn-Book of 1875 (Hymn 190), and to six in the present book (Hymn 370). Eighty-four hymns from *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, including this one, were published as *Hymns and Spiritual Songs* in 1753; the fifth edition of 1758, the ninth of 1760, the tenth of 1763, and the twelfth of 1765, are those referred to in this paragraph. This was the hymn-book commonly used by the Methodists until 1780, when the *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists*, the ancestor of our present hymn-book, was published.

8. Sermon V in Vol. I of the col-

lected sermons published in 1746. The edition of 'seven or eight years ago' must be the second edition by W. Bowyer, which was published in 1754. Was there any edition of 1757 or 1758, as is here stated? Or was Wesley two or three years out in his date? The quotation is found above, vol. 1, p. 118.

9. The *Treatise on Justification* was published in this same year, 1765, not 'last year.' It was an abridgement of John Goodwin's work; in the preface is an answer to Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio*, and a statement of the circumstances of the controversy with him.

again : “ All such expressions as these,—that we are justified by the grace of God, that Christ is our righteousness, that righteousness was procured for us by the death and resurrection of Christ, import the same thing ; namely, that the righteousness of Christ, both His active and passive righteousness, is the meritorious cause of our justification, and has procured for us at God’s hand, that, upon our believing, we should be accounted righteous by Him ” ’ (page 5).

10. But perhaps some will object, ‘ Nay, but you affirm that faith is imputed to us for righteousness.’ St. Paul affirms this over and over ; therefore I affirm it too. Faith is imputed for righteousness to every believer , namely, faith in the righteousness of Christ : but this is exactly the same thing which has been said before ; for by that expression I mean neither more nor less, than that we are justified by faith, not by works ; or that every believer is forgiven and accepted, merely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered.

11. ‘ But is not a believer invested or clothed with the righteousness of Christ ? ’ Undoubtedly he is. And accordingly the words above recited are the language of every believing heart,—

Jesu, Thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, my glorious dress.

That is, ‘ For the sake of Thy active and passive righteousness, I am forgiven and accepted of God.’

‘ But must not we put off the filthy rags of our own righteousness, before we can put on the spotless righteousness of Christ ? ’ Certainly we must , that is, in plain terms, we must repent, before we can believe the gospel. We must be cut off from dependence upon ourselves, before we can truly depend upon Christ. We must cast away all confidence in our own righteousness, or we cannot have a true confidence in His. Till we are delivered from trusting in anything that we do, we cannot thoroughly trust in what He has done and suffered. First, we receive the sentence of death in ourselves : then, we trust in Him that lived and died for us.

12. ‘ But do not you believe inherent righteousness ? ’ Yes,

in its proper place ; not as the ground of our acceptance with God, but as the fruit of it ; not in the place of imputed righteousness, but as consequent upon it. That is, I believe God implants righteousness in every one to whom He has imputed it. I believe, ' Jesus Christ is made of God unto us sanctification,' as well as ' righteousness ', or, that God sanctifies, as well as justifies, all them that believe in Him. They to whom the righteousness of Christ is imputed are made righteous by the Spirit of Christ ; are renewed in the image of God, ' after the likeness wherein they were created, in righteousness and true holiness.'

13. ' But do not you put faith in the room of Christ, or of His righteousness ? ' By no means : I take particular care to put each of these in its proper place. The righteousness of Christ is the whole and sole foundation of all our hope. It is by faith that the Holy Ghost enables us to build upon this foundation. God gives this faith ; in that moment we are accepted of God : and yet, not for the sake of that faith, but of what Christ has done and suffered for us. You see, each of these has its proper place, and neither clashes with the other : we believe, we love, we endeavour to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless : yet,—

While thus we bestow  
Our moments below,  
Ourselves we forsake,  
And refuge in Jesus's righteousness take.  
His passion alone,  
The foundation we own ;  
And pardon we claim,  
And eternal redemption in Jesus's name.

14. I therefore no more deny the righteousness of Christ, than I deny the Godhead of Christ, and a man may full as

12. Inherent righteousness is the technical term for the righteousness which is implanted in the heart and manifested in the life of the believer.

13. The quotation is from Charles Wesley's hymn beginning ' Come, let us arise, And press to the skies,'

first published in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, vol. ii (1749), as No. 14 of the section ' For Christian Friends.' It is Hymn 598 in the Methodist Hymn-Book. In the original ' The foundation ' is printed in italics.

14. ' Socinians and Arians.' Wes-

justly charge me with denying the one as the other. Neither do I deny imputed righteousness this is another unkind and unjust accusation. I always did, and do still continually, affirm, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to every believer. But who deny it? Why, all infidels, whether baptized or unbaptized; all who affirm the glorious gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ to be a cunningly-devised fable; all Socinians and Arians; all who deny the supreme Godhead of the Lord that bought them; they, of consequence, deny His divine righteousness, as they suppose Him to be a mere creature, and they deny His human righteousness, as imputed to any man, seeing they believe every one is accepted for his own righteousness.

15. The human righteousness of Christ, at least the imputation of it, as the whole and sole meritorious cause of the justification of a sinner before God, is likewise denied by the members of the Church of Rome; by all of them who are true to the principles of their own Church. But undoubtedly there are many among them whose experience goes beyond their principles; who, though they are far from expressing themselves justly, yet feel what they know not how to express. Yea, although their conceptions of this great truth be as crude as their expressions, yet with their hearts they believe: they rest on Christ alone, both unto present and eternal salvation.

16. With these we may rank those even in the Reformed Churches who are usually termed Mystics. One of the chief

ley is thinking chiefly of the Deistical movement of the late 'seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, which is associated with the names of Charles Blount, John Toland, Nicholas Tindal, and Anthony Collins; and later, of David Hume. The effect of this controversy was, as Lecky says, 'to lower enthusiasm and to diminish superstition. Men became half believers. Strong religious passions of all kinds died away.' Dr. Townsend, in *New Hist. of Methodism*, i. 128, says: 'The sen-

timents and principles of the Deists gained multitudes of adherents. The wits, beaux, and rakes of the fashionable world gladly availed themselves of teachings which relaxed the bonds of morality and permitted greater licence of conduct.'

15. The Council of Trent did not deny the imputation of Christ's righteousness altogether, but denied that it was the *sole* ground of acceptance with God.

16. William Law (1686-1761), the author of *A Serious Call* and *Chris-*

of these, in the present century (at least in England), was Mr. Law. It is well known that he absolutely and zealously denied the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as zealously as Robert Barclay, who scruples not to say, 'Imputed righteousness!—imputed nonsense!' The body of the people known by the name of Quakers espouse the same sentiment. Nay, the generality of those who profess themselves members of the Church of England are either totally ignorant of the matter, and know nothing about imputed righteousness, or deny this and justification by faith together, as destructive of good works. To these we may add a considerable number of the people vulgarly styled Anabaptists, together with thou-

*tian Perfection*, two books which had a very great influence on John Wesley's earlier religious life, tended more and more to Mysticism in his later life, and his two tracts, *The Spirit of Prayer* and *The Spirit of Love*, altogether deny the doctrine of justification by faith. 'Salvation,' he says, 'which all divines agree includes both justification and sanctification, is nothing else but to be made like Christ.' Again, 'The one only work of Christ as your Redeemer is to raise into life the smothered spark of heaven in you.' 'All that Christ does as an atonement has no other operation but that of renewing the fallen nature of man.' In a letter to Lady Huntingdon (September 14, 1772) Wesley says, 'That great truth—justification by faith; which Mr. Law indeed flatly denies (and yet Mr. Law was a child of God).'

Robert Barclay (1648–90), the author of *An Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, the most important manifesto of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, as they were derisively called from their 'swelling, shivering, and shaking' under the influence of the Spirit, declares: 'As many as receive the light, in

them is produced a holy and spiritual birth, bringing forth holiness, righteousness, purity, and all other blessed fruits. By which holy birth, as we are sanctified, so we are justified.' Whereon Wesley remarks: 'This is flat justification by works.' But his answer to Barclay in *A Letter to a Person lately joined with the Quakers* (1748), in *Works*, x. 177, should be read throughout.

By Anabaptists Wesley means the denomination now known as Baptists; they were called Anabaptists (baptizers over again) because they taught that infant baptism was invalid, and that those who had been baptized in infancy had to be baptized over again by immersion, in order to salvation. The Anabaptists, Presbyterians, and Independents (now more usually called Congregationalists) comprised the great mass of the dissenters from the Church of England in the eighteenth century. Wesley, a devoted son of the Church of England, naturally was to some extent prejudiced in his judgement of them; but it is generally admitted that the infection of Deism and Latitudinarianism was widely spread amongst them. The concluding paragraph would be felt to

sands of Presbyterians and Independents, lately enlightened by the writings of Dr. Taylor. On the last I am not called to pass any sentence I leave them to Him that made them. But will any one dare to affirm that all Mystics (such as Mr. Law in particular), all Quakers, all Presbyterians or Independents, and all members of the Church of England who are not clear in their opinions or expressions, are void of all Christian experience?—that, consequently, they are all in a state of damnation, ‘without hope, without God in the world’? However confused their ideas may be, however improper their language, may there not be many of them whose heart is right toward God, and who effectually know ‘the Lord our Righteousness’?

17. But, blessed be God, we are not among those who are so dark in their conceptions and expressions. We no more deny the phrase than the thing; but we are unwilling to obtrude it on other men. Let them use either this or such other expressions as they judge to be more exactly scriptural, provided their heart rests only on what Christ hath done and suffered, for pardon, grace, and glory. I cannot express this better than in Mr. Hervey’s words, worthy to be wrote in letters of gold: ‘We are not solicitous as to any particular set of phrases. Only let men be humbled as repenting criminals at Christ’s feet, let them rely as devoted pensioners on His merits, and they are undoubtedly in the way to a blessed immortality.’

18. Is there any need, is there any possibility, of saying more? Let us only abide by this declaration, and all the contention about this or that particular phrase is torn up by the roots. Keep to this,—‘All who are humbled as repenting

be a piece of amusing impertinence in a modern Anglican divine; but it really was a big concession in Wesley’s time to admit the possibility of salvation for those who were not only outside the Church, but whose beliefs were so strongly opposed to her teachings. The sermons on Bigotry and on the Catholic

Spirit express the broadest Christian charity, and were much in advance of anything that was held on the subject in those days; would that their spirit were more common even now! On Dr. Taylor, see Introduction to Sermon XXXVIII.

17. The quotation is from Hervey’s *Theron and Aspasio*, dial. ii, p. 67.

criminals at Christ's feet, and rely as devoted pensioners on His merits, are in the way to a blessed immortality'; and what room for dispute? Who denies this? Do we not all meet on this ground? What then shall we wrangle about? A man of peace here proposes terms of accommodation to all the contending parties. We desire no better: we accept of the terms: we subscribe to them with heart and hand. Whoever refuses so to do, set a mark upon that man! He is an enemy of peace, a troubler of Israel, a disturber of the Church of God.

19. In the mean time, what we are afraid of is this: lest any should use the phrase, 'The righteousness of Christ,' or, 'The righteousness of Christ is imputed to me,' as a cover for his unrighteousness. We have known this done a thousand times. A man has been reprov'd, suppose, for drunkenness: 'Oh,' said he, 'I pretend to no righteousness of *my own*; Christ is *my righteousness*.' Another has been told, that 'the extortioner, the unjust, shall not inherit the kingdom of God'; he replies, with all assurance, 'I am unjust in myself, but I have a spotless righteousness in Christ.' And thus, though a man be as far from the practice as from the tempers of a Christian; though he neither has the mind which was in Christ, nor in any respect walks as He walked; yet he has armour of proof against all conviction, in what he calls 'the righteousness of Christ.'

20. It is the seeing so many deplorable instances of this kind, which makes us sparing in the use of these expressions. And I cannot but call upon all of you who use them frequently, and beseech you in the name of God our Saviour, whose you are, and whom you serve, earnestly to guard all that hear you against this accursed abuse of them. O warn them (it may be they will hear *your* voice) against 'continuing in sin that grace may abound'! Warn them against making 'Christ the minister of sin', against making void that solemn decree of God, 'Without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' by a vain imagination of being *holy in Christ*! O warn them

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19. This was the true ground of    they had led as a matter of fact to  
Wesley's criticism of Hervey's views;    gross Antinomianism.

that if they remain unrighteous, the righteousness of Christ will profit them nothing ! Cry aloud (is there not a cause ?) that for this very end the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, that ' the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us ' ; and that we may ' live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.'

It remains only to make a short and plain application. And, first, I would address myself to you who violently oppose these expressions, and are ready to condemn all that use them as Antinomians. But is not this bending the bow too much the other way ? Why should you condemn all who do not speak just as you do ? Why should you quarrel with them for using the phrases they like, any more than they with you for taking the same liberty ? Or, if they do quarrel with you upon that account, do not imitate the bigotry which you blame. At least, allow them the liberty which they ought to allow you. And why should you be angry at an expression ? ' O, it has been abused ! ' And what expression has not ? However, the abuse may be removed, and, at the same time, the use remain. Above all, be sure to retain the important sense which is couched under that expression ' All the blessings I enjoy, all I hope for in time and in eternity, are given wholly and solely for the sake of what Christ has done and suffered for me.'

I would, secondly, add a few words to you who are fond of these expressions. And permit me to ask, Do not I allow enough ? What can any reasonable man desire more ? I allow the whole sense which you contend for ; that we have every blessing through the righteousness of God our Saviour. I allow *you* to use whatever expressions you choose, and that a thousand times over, only guarding them against that dreadful abuse, which you are as deeply concerned to prevent as I am. I myself frequently use the expression in question, —imputed righteousness ; and often put this and the like

20. ' All the blessings I enjoy,' &c. This sentence expresses Hervey's own view, as could be shown from scores of passages in *Theron and*

*Aspasio* ; indeed, I am pretty sure that it is a quotation from that work, though I have not actually found it. In the *Eleven Letters*, Wesley is

expressions into the mouth of a whole congregation. But allow me liberty of conscience herein : allow me the right of private judgement. Allow me to use it just as often as I judge it preferable to any other expression ; and be not angry with me, if I cannot judge it proper to use any one expression every two minutes. You may, if you please ; but do not condemn me because I do not. Do not, for this, represent me as a Papist, or ' an enemy to the righteousness of Christ.' Bear with me, as I do with you ; else how shall we ' fulfil the law of Christ ' ? Do not make tragical outcries, as though I were ' subverting the very foundations of Christianity.' Whoever does this, does me much wrong : the Lord lay it not to his charge ! I lay, and have done for many years, the very same foundation with you. And, indeed, ' other foundation can no man lay, than that which is laid, even Jesus Christ.' I build inward and outward holiness thereon, as you do, even by faith. Do not, therefore, suffer any distaste, or unkindness, no, nor any shyness or coldness of your heart. If there were a difference of opinion, where is our religion if we cannot think and let think ? What hinders but you may forgive me as easily as I may forgive you ? How much more, when there is only a difference of expression ? Nay, hardly so much as that—all the dispute being only, whether a particular mode of expression shall be used more or less frequently ? Surely we must earnestly desire to contend with one another, before we can make this a bone of contention ! O let us not any more, for such very trifles as these, give our common enemies room to blaspheme !

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accused of being a Papist. Hervey (or Cudworth more probably) says : ' Mr. Wesley setting aside pardon and reconciliation, together with the one perfect righteousness that procures them, ascribes all to the love of God. This notion may pass current at Rome, but not among the Protestant Churches.' Wesley's answer is that he teaches quite the contrary.

' These tragical outcries.' Wesley is accused in the *Eleven Letters of*

being self-sufficient, inconsistent, ignorant of theology, unchristian, impudent, heretical, Antinomian ; and finally of being ' a knave, a dishonest man, one of no truth, justice, or integrity.' ' My dear sir,' says the author, ' let me give you a word of friendly advice. Before you turn Turk, Deist, or Atheist, see that you first become an honest man.' Well may Wesley exclaim, ' And is this thy voice, my son David ? '

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Rather let us at length cut off occasion from them that seek occasion! Let us at length (O why was it not done before?) join hearts and hands in the service of our great Master. As we have 'one Lord, one faith, one hope of our calling,' let us all strengthen each other's hands in God, and with one heart and one mouth declare to all mankind, 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

## SERMON L

### THE SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION

THIS sermon was first published in a separate form in 1765 ; it is not in the original four volumes, but was placed in Vol. III of the collected *Works* of 1771. It is from the same text as the University Sermon (No. I), but entirely different from it in its treatment of the subject. In that, the text is given as ' By grace are ye saved through faith ' ; in this, as ' Ye are saved through faith ' ; and in the *Journal* the sermons are usually distinguished by the form of the text. The first was one of Wesley's favourites, and it is recorded seven times at least in the body of the *Journal*, and several times in the Sermon-Register. No doubt it was not always verbally the same as the Oxford sermon, but it would be on the same general lines of treatment. The earliest notice I have found of the second sermon is in the *Journal*, March 30, 1764. Wesley was at Rotherham, and had found there sixty persons professing to have received the blessing of entire sanctification. ' In the evening I preached in the new house at Rotherham on the sure foundation " Ye are saved through faith." ' It was a season of strong consolation to many. One who had been some time groaning for full redemption now found power to believe that God had fulfilled her desire, and set her heart at liberty.' On October 7 in the same year he preached ' in Moorfields to a huge multitude on " Ye are saved through faith." ' As we have seen in some other cases, he seems to have liked to preach his sermons, to try them over, so to speak, a time or two, before he printed them ; and it is pretty clear from the context that the Rotherham sermon was on entire sanctification, as this is. If the ' five-and-twenty ' years of iii. 3 is to be taken as an exact figure, dating from the delivery of the first sermon in 1738, this one would have been written in 1763 ; but the twenty-five may be a round number, equivalent to ' about a quarter of a century ago.'

The object of the sermon was to correct the erroneous doctrines of the Glasites, or Sandemanians, which had been more or less accepted by Thomas Maxfield and George Bell, and had wrought havoc in the Society in London. John Glas was originally a Presbyterian minister, but was deposed in 1730, and started a congregation of his own in

Dundee, to which others in Edinburgh and Perth were soon attached. His son-in-law, Robert Sandeman, joined him in Perth, and soon became the leader of the sect. He taught that faith was a mere intellectual assent to the truth of the gospel story, and that 'the bare death of Jesus Christ, without a thought or deed on the part of man, is sufficient to present the chief of sinners spotless before God.' He attacked Hervey's account of faith in *Theron and Aspasio*, and Wesley came to the rescue of his old friend, and answered Sandeman in a pamphlet published in 1757, and included in his collected *Works*. Maxfield and Bell developed the Antinomian tendency of his teaching, and denied that good works were necessary to sanctification, or that the means of grace were of any value; 'God has done,' said Bell, 'with all preachings and sacraments.' At the same time they depreciated justification, affirming that a merely justified person was not born of God, and that he could neither please God nor grow in grace; and asserted that the entirely sanctified believer was absolutely perfect, infallible, inaccessible to temptation, and secure from ever falling. They finally separated from Wesley in 1763 and took with them many members of his Societies. It was to counteract the influence of their teaching that Wesley wrote his *Cautions and Directions to the greatest Professors* (1762), the sermon on Sin in Believers (1763), and this sermon.

Comparing it with Sermon I, we note, (1) the definite place and importance assigned to 'preventing grace' in the work of salvation; (2) the clear distinction drawn between justification and sanctification; (3) the recognition that after justification, sin still remains in believers; (4) hence the necessity for entire sanctification, for which repentance and good works are necessary, though not in the same degree or in the same sense as faith.

Dr. Beet (*London Quarterly Review*, January 1920) draws attention to the great contrast between Sermon XXXV on Christian Perfection and Sermon L on The Scripture Way of Salvation. The latter 'is a compact statement of Wesley's mature thought about the great doctrines which inspired the Methodist Revival; it is of more practical value than all the other sermons put together.' 'He asserts again and again that, as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith; and very forcibly describes this saving faith. He also urges his readers to accept here and now this great salvation.'

In *Minutes*, 1766, the Assistants are directed to see that this sermon, as well as Sermons XXXVI, XXXVIII, and XLIX, are carefully dispersed in the Societies.

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*Ye are saved through faith.*—EPH. ii. 8.

I. NOTHING can be more intricate, complex, and hard to be understood, than religion, as it has been often described. And this is not only true concerning the religion of the Heathens, even many of the wisest of them, but concerning the religion of those also who were, in some sense, Christians ; yea, and men of great name in the Christian world , men who seemed to be pillars thereof. Yet how easy to be understood, how plain and simple a thing, is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ ; provided only that we take it in its native form, just as it is described in the oracles of God ! It is exactly suited, by the wise Creator and Governor of the world, to the weak understanding and narrow capacity of man in his present state. How observable is this, both with regard to the end it proposes, and the means to attain that end ! The end is, in one word, salvation ; the means to attain it, faith.

2. It is easily discerned, that these two little words, I mean faith and salvation, include the substance of all the Bible, the marrow, as it were, of the whole Scripture. So much the more should we take all possible care to avoid all mistake concerning them, and to form a true and accurate judgement concerning both the one and the other.

3. Let us then seriously inquire,—

I. WHAT IS SALVATION ?

II. WHAT IS THAT FAITH WHEREBY WE ARE SAVED ? AND,

III. HOW ARE WE SAVED BY IT ?

I. I. And, first, let us inquire, What is salvation ? The salvation which is here spoken of is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven, eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord, ' Abraham's bosom.' It is not a blessing which lies

Par. 3. The divisions of Sermon I are :

1. What faith it is through which we are saved.

2. What is the salvation which is through faith.

3. How we may answer some objections.

on the other side death, or, as we usually speak, in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question: '*Ye are saved.*' It is not something at a distance: it is a present thing, a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, '*Ye have been saved*': so that the salvation which is here spoken of might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory.

2. If we take this in its utmost extent, it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed 'natural conscience,' but more properly, 'preventing grace'; all the drawings of the Father—the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more; all that light wherewith the Son of God 'enlighteneth every one that cometh into the world'—showing every man 'to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God'; all the convictions which His Spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man—although it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all.

3. But we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the Apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts, justification and sanctification.

Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed 'the meritorious cause of our justification'), is the blood and righteousness of Christ, or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done

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1. 1. Compare Sermon I, ii. 1. '*Ye are saved*'; the perfect tense is used in the Greek, which means '*Ye have been, and now are saved.*'

2. The doctrine of preventing, or prevenient, grace is most important in Wesley's theology. In opposition to Pelagianism, it asserts the total depravity of man, so that of himself

he has no power to repent or turn to God; but in opposition to Calvinism, it affirms that preventing grace is given to *every* man, whereby he is enabled, if he will, to repent and turn to God.

3. Note that Wesley here definitely includes the life as well as the death of our Lord in the meritorious cause

and suffered for us, till He 'poured out His soul for the transgressors.' The immediate effects of justification are, the peace of God, a 'peace that passeth all understanding,' and a 'rejoicing in hope of the glory of God' 'with joy unspeakable and full of glory.'

4. And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit: there is a *real* as well as a *relative* change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel 'the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us'; producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God, expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honour, of money, together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into 'the mind which was in Christ Jesus.'

5. How naturally do those who experience such a change imagine that all sin is gone; that it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no more any place therein! How easily do they draw that inference, 'I *feel* no sin; therefore, I *have* none it does not *stir*; therefore, it does not *exist*: it has no *motion*; therefore, it has no *being*!'

6. But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return,

of our justification; His active as well as His passive fulfilling of all righteousness.

4. Though we have here a definite distinction between justification and sanctification, there is still some confusion between sanctification and regeneration; the new birth is regarded as sanctification in its beginning. It is more exactly right to say that regeneration is the impartation of the new *life* through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit; sanctification is the gift of holiness or spiritual *health*, holiness and health being by derivation the same. Of

course there can be no life without some measure of health; but we can distinguish between life and health; and whilst there are no degrees in life—a man is either alive or dead—there are degrees in health, and it is capable of improvement.

5. Compare this paragraph with Sermon I, ii. 6, of which it is the explanation and correction. There it is stated that he that is born of God sinneth not, even by any sinful desire; here we are told that 'sin is only suspended, not destroyed at the time of justification.' See Sermons XLVI and XLVII, and notes.

and sin revives, showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other; 'the flesh lusting against the Spirit'; nature opposing the grace of God. They cannot deny, that although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and to love God; and although His 'Spirit' still 'witnesses with their spirits, that they are children of God', yet they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these frequently *stirring* in their heart, though not *conquering*, yea, perhaps, 'thrusting sore at them that they may fall', but the Lord is their help.

7. How exactly did Macarius, fourteen hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God: 'The unskilful,' or unexperienced, 'when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again. For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were wellnigh burned up.'

8. From the time of our being born again, the gradual work of sanctification takes place. We are enabled 'by the Spirit' to 'mortify the deeds of the body,' of our evil nature; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to 'abstain from all appearance of evil,' and are 'zealous of good works,' as we have opportunity, doing good to

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7. Macarius was a hermit in Egypt during the latter part of the fourth century A.D. It is not certain that the *Homilies* which go by his name were written by him; there was another Macarius (of Pisper), also an Egyptian hermit, who died A.D. 356; and yet another who lived in the Thebaid about the same time. Little

is known with certainty about any of them. Wesley read the *Homilies* when he was in Savannah, and published them in the first volume of the *Christian Library* in 1749. The quotation is from Homily ix. 4.

8. 'Appearance of evil'; more correctly, form or species of evil.

all men ; while we walk in all His ordinances blameless, therein worshipping Him in spirit and in truth ; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

9. It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification, for a full salvation from all our sins—from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief, or, as the Apostle expresses it, ‘go on unto perfection.’ But what is perfection? The word has various senses: here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love ‘rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks.’

II. But what is that faith through which we are saved? This is the second point to be considered.

1. Faith, in general, is defined by the Apostle, *πραγμάτων ἔλεγχος οὐ βλεπομένων*—an evidence, a divine evidence and conviction (the word means both) of things not seen, not visible, not perceivable either by sight, or by any other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural evidence of God, and of the things of God; a kind of spiritual light exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural sight or perception thereof. Accordingly, the Scripture speaks of God’s giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul: ‘God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ And elsewhere

II. 1. This is the definition given in Heb. xi. 1, but it is rather a statement of the characteristics of faith than a definition. Faith itself is the faculty of spiritual discernment, and through the exercise of it things hoped for receive substantial existence for the believer, so that they become real motives for his actions; and things not seen, not apprehensible by the senses, are recognized as being as real and present as the objects of vision and touch

and hearing. The test of the reality of these things to the believer is their power as motives to action. Thus Noah built the ark because the flood was real to him; Moses refused the treasures of Egypt because the Messianic destiny of his nation was real to him; and the faculty by which they became real was faith.

There is a little confusion in this paragraph between sight and light. Faith is a faculty or operation of the spirit, and corresponds

the same Apostle speaks of ' the eyes of ' our ' understanding being opened.' By this two-fold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural ' eye hath not seen, neither the ear heard.' We have a prospect of the invisible things of God , we see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties than if it had no being. And we see the *eternal world* , piercing through the veil which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.

2. Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine *evidence* and *conviction* not only that ' God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself,' but also that Christ loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*. It is by this faith (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we *receive Christ* , that we receive Him in all His offices,

to sight in the physical world. By nature man is spiritually blind, seeing neither the true significance of sin, nor the realities of the eternal things. What he needs is to have his eyes opened, to receive the gift of faith. The light is already come into the world, and no further revelation is needed ; so that it is not necessary to suppose a twofold operation of the Spirit in conversion. Our Lord had not to create the sun again every time He restored sight to the blind. ' This is the condemnation, that *light is come into the world* ; and men love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil.'

2. With this definition of faith compare the one given in Sermon I, i. 5: ' Christian faith is not only an assent to the whole gospel of Christ, but also a full reliance on the blood of Christ, a trust in the merits of His life, death, and resurrection ; a recumbency upon Him as our atonement and our life, as *given for us*,

and *living in us* ; and, in consequence hereof, a closing with Him, and cleaving to Him, as our " wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." "

The essence of a thing is that without which it would not be what it is, and which is therefore part of its definition. A property is a quality which is always present in the thing, but which is not part of its definition. Thus, it is the *essence* of a triangle that it should be enclosed by three straight lines ; it is a property of it that its three interior angles are together equal to two right angles. Apparently Wesley means that the essence of saving faith is that we trust in Christ ; and a property of it that we receive Him in all His offices. Or it is possible he may mean that the essence of faith is the realization of unseen spiritual facts : one of its properties is in particular the realization of Christ as our personal Saviour.

as our Prophet, Priest, and King. It is by this that He is 'made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.'

3. 'But is this the *faith of assurance*, or *faith of adherence*?' The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The Apostle says, 'There is one faith, and one hope of our calling', one Christian, saving faith; 'as there is one Lord,' in whom we believe, and 'one God and Father of us all.' And it is certain, this faith necessarily implies an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me. For 'he that believeth' with the true living faith 'hath the witness in himself' 'the Spirit witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God.' 'Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father'; giving him an assurance that he is so, and a childlike confidence in Him. But let it be observed, that, in the very nature of the thing, the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is a child of God. There-

3. 'Faith of adherence' means the faith by which a man cleaves to Christ; 'faith of assurance' the faith which brings the consciousness of salvation. In *Journal*, January 5, 1740, Wesley says, 'One came to me in the evening to know if a man could not be saved without the faith of assurance. I answered: "I cannot approve of your terms, because they are not scriptural. I find no such phrase as either faith of assurance or faith of adherence in the Bible. Besides, you speak as if there were two faiths in one Lord. Whereas St. Paul tells us there is but one faith in one Lord. I never knew one soul saved without what you call the faith of assurance; I mean, a sure confidence that by the merits of Christ he was reconciled to the favour of God."' The real

point of the question is, 'Can a man have saving faith without being conscious of salvation?' Wesley taught that faith always brings the witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God; and that religion being an experience, it must necessarily be experienced; but he allows (*Minutes*, 1745) that there may be exempt cases, and that there may be infinite degrees of assurance; and in *Minutes*, 1747, he affirms that all sincere seekers after God, though they may not have this assurance, will certainly receive it in their last hour, if not before.

This attempt to place assurance and confidence in order of time is not at all convincing; it would be just as true to say, 'A man cannot know that he is a child of God until he has exercised faith in Christ.' In

fore, confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second, branch or act of faith.

4. It is by this faith we are saved, justified, and sanctified ; taking that word in its highest sense. But how are we justified and sanctified by faith ? This is our third head of inquiry. And this being the main point in question, and a point of no ordinary importance, it will not be improper to give it a more distinct and particular consideration.

III. 1. And, first, how are we justified by faith ? In what sense is this to be understood ? I answer, Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the *condition* none is justified but he that believes : without faith no man is justified. And it is the *only condition* this alone is sufficient for justification. Every one that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words : no man is justified till he believes , every man when he believes is justified.

2. ' But does not God command us to repent also ? Yea, and to " bring forth fruits meet for repentance "—to cease, for instance, from doing evil, and learn to do well ? And is not both the one and the other of the utmost necessity, insomuch that if we willingly neglect either, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all ? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of justification ? '

God does undoubtedly command us both to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance , which if we willingly neglect, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all : therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are, in some sense, necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree* ; for those fruits are only necessary

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fact, the two things are really simultaneous, though they may be distinguished in order of thought.

4. ' Its highest sense,' i.e. the sense of entire sanctification.

III. 1. Wesley modified this view

to some extent ; see *Journal*, December 1, 1767, quoted in the note at the end of Sermon II.

2. In the *Minutes*, 1770, Wesley says that we are saved ' not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a

*conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the *thief* upon the cross (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable person !); but he cannot be justified without faith; this is impossible. Likewise, let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail, he is not justified till he believes. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified.—Not in the *same sense*, for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary; necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification. It remains, that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification.

3. 'But do you believe we are sanctified by faith? We know you believe that we are justified by faith, but do not you believe, and accordingly teach, that we are sanctified by our works?' So it has been roundly and vehemently

*condition.*' He adds that, if this be so, he is afraid that 'for these thirty years we have been disputing about words.' According to the *N. E. Dict.* a condition is 'Something that must exist or be present if something else is to be or take place'; in this sense repentance is certainly a condition of salvation. Dr. W. B. Pope puts the matter very clearly (*Theology*, ii. 371), 'As the conditions of that salvation repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ are always united in the New Testament. They cannot be separated, as repentance implies pre-existing faith, and faith implies pre-existing repentance. But they differ in this, that faith is the instrument as well as a condition of individual acceptance; and, as such, springs out of and follows repentance.' This is just what Wesley means.

I have not yet identified this 'late writer,' but it has often been pointed out that the word used to describe the penitent thief does not mean a common thief, but rather a bandit; and it is quite possible that his offence may have been rather political than social; there were many bands of outlaws at this time whose object was the overthrow of the Roman government, and not private spoliation. As to the absence of good works in his case, Wesley himself says in his note on Luke xxiii. 40, 'What a surprising degree was here of repentance, faith, and other graces! And what abundance of good works, in his public confession of his sin, reproof of his fellow-criminal, his honourable testimony to Christ, and profession of faith in Him, while He was in so disgraceful circumstances, as were stumbling even to His disciples.'

affirmed for these five-and-twenty years but I have constantly declared just the contrary; and that in all manner of ways. I have continually testified in private and in public, that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith. And indeed the one of those great truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the condition, and the only condition, of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the *condition* none is sanctified but he that believes, without faith no man is sanctified. And it is the *only condition*: this alone is sufficient for sanctification. Every one that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is sanctified till he believes every man when he believes is sanctified.

4. 'But is there not a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification? And is it not incumbent on all that are justified to be "zealous of good works"? Yea, are not these so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified in the full sense, that is, perfected in love? Nay, can he grow at all in grace, in the loving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ? Yea, can he retain the grace which God has already given him? Can he continue in the faith which he has received, or in the favour of God? Do not you yourself allow all this, and continually assert it? But, if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of sanctification?'

5. I do allow all this, and continually maintain it as the truth of God. I allow there is a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification. It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And

3. 'Five-and-twenty years.' From 1738 to 1763, when this sermon was probably written. See Introduction.

4. This is still the old striving about words; see note above (p. 452).

5. See Sermons XLVI and XLVII and notes.

Dr. Pope (*Theology*, ii. 371) says,

'So far as the old man remains in the regenerate there must be a perpetual turning away from the sins of the past and advancement towards holiness. In other words, there is an ethical conversion that goes on until the soul is entirely dead to sin and one with God.'

these are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them, he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified, he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus; nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received; he cannot continue in faith, or in the favour of God.

What is the inference we must draw herefrom? Why, that both repentance, rightly understood, and the practice of all good works—works of piety, as well as works of mercy (now properly so called, since they spring from faith), are, in some sense, necessary to sanctification.

6. I say, ‘repentance rightly understood’; for this must not be confounded with the former repentance. The repentance consequent upon justification is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not suppose any doubt of the favour of God, or any ‘fear that hath torment.’ It is properly a conviction, wrought by the Holy Ghost, of the *sin* which still *remains* in our heart; of the *φρόνημα σαρκός*, the *carnal mind*, which ‘does still *remain*’ (as our Church speaks) ‘even in them that are regenerate’; although it does no longer *reign*; it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of an heart bent to backsliding, of the still continuing tendency of the flesh to lust against the spirit. Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of ease, love of honour, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to Atheism, or idolatry; and above all, to unbelief; whereby, in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretences, we are ever departing, more or less, from the living God.

7. With this conviction of the sin remaining in our hearts,

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6. Article IX says: ‘This infection of nature doth remain, yea, in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh, called in Greek *phronema sarkos*, which some do

expound the wisdom, some sensuality, some the affection, some the desire, of the flesh, is not subject to the law of God.’

there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives ; still *cleaving* to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them , something that could not endure the righteous judgement of God, were He extreme to mark what is done amiss. Where we least suspected it, we find a taint of pride or self-will, of unbelief or idolatry , so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins : and hence we cannot but feel that these are so far from having anything meritorious in them, yea, so far from being able to stand in sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God, were it not for the blood of the covenant.

8. Experience shows that, together with this conviction of sin *remaining* in our hearts, and *cleaving* to all our words and actions ; as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur, were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood ; one thing more is implied in this repentance , namely, a conviction of our helplessness, of our utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire ; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action, but through His free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment.

9. ' But what good works are those, the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification ? ' First, all works of piety , such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet , receiving the supper of the Lord ; searching the Scriptures, by hearing, reading, meditating , and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

10. Secondly, all works of mercy , whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men , such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick, or variously afflicted ; such as the

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8. ' Preventing,' i.e. in the old sense, going before us.

9. This and the following paragraphs are directed against the

Antinomians, who gave so much anxiety to Wesley at this time. See introduction to Sermon XII.

endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded, to succour the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the 'fruits meet for repentance,' which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed His children to wait for complete salvation.

11. Hence may appear the extreme mischievousness of that seemingly innocent opinion, that there is no sin in a believer; that all sin is destroyed, root and branch, the moment a man is justified. By totally preventing that repentance, it quite blocks up the way to sanctification. There is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart consequently, there is no place for his being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary.

12. Hence it may likewise appear, that there is no possible danger in *thus* expecting full salvation. For suppose we were mistaken, suppose no such blessing ever was or can be attained, yet we lose nothing: nay, that very expectation quickens us in using all the talents which God has given us; yea, in improving them all; so that when our Lord cometh, He will receive His own with increase.

13. But to return. Though it be allowed, that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree.—Not in the *same degree*, for these fruits are only necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them, otherwise a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise, let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not at all avail: he is not sanctified till he believes. But the moment he believes,

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11. Of course the answer to this by the Antinomians would be that, since there is no sin in a believer,

there is no need of any further sanctification.

13. Cf. par. iii. 2 above and note.

with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified.—Not in the *same sense*, for this repentance and these fruits are only *remotely* necessary—necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it, whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to sanctification. It remains, that faith is the only condition which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to sanctification.

14. 'But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified,—saved from sin, and perfected in love?' It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the holy Scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step further. And one would imagine there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this, than the ancient promise, 'Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.' How clearly does this express the being perfected in love!—how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?

15. It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised He is able to perform. Admitting, therefore, that 'with men it is impossible' to 'bring a clean thing out of an unclean,' to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing 'with God all things are possible.' And surely no one ever imagined it was possible to any power less than that of the Almighty! But if God speaks, it shall be done. God saith, 'Let there be light, and there is light'!

16. It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that He is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a

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14. On Circumcision of the Heart see Sermon XIII.

16. The whole question depends on what is meant by entire sanctification. If it means a state, continuous from the moment of its first realiza-

tion until death, then it seems certain that it can only be given when the believer is prepared for it by growth and development in the Christian life. But if it means that at any given moment, by faith in

moment to Him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is His will. And He cannot want or stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons He is pleased to honour. We may therefore boldly say, at any point of time, 'Now is the day of salvation!' 'To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts!' 'Behold, all things are now ready, come unto the marriage!'

17. To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more,—a divine evidence and conviction that He doeth it. In that hour it is done God says to the inmost soul, 'According to thy faith be it unto thee!' Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean 'from all unrighteousness.' The believer then experiences the deep meaning of those solemn words, 'If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have

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Christ, the believer may attain complete victory over sin, then it is assuredly possible *now*. And such seasons of glorious victory over sin will become more and more continuous as the habit of faith grows and develops. But it is dangerous and misleading to teach that there are two sorts of Christian life, a lower and a higher state, and that entire sanctification is the passing from one to the other. There is only one Christian life, and its ideal is a life absolutely free from sin, whether in act or desire; and the actual life of the Christian is a gradual approximation to that ideal, during which the periods of complete deliverance from sin become more and more the habit of the soul. It is a purely speculative question whether we should say of ourselves or of others that we are in a state of entire sanctification; holiness is the spiritual analogue of health, and there is no danger of confusion between a state of normal

health and of invalidism, although we may not be able to affirm of any man that he is scientifically in a state of perfect health. The paragraph at the end of the *Minutes* of 1770, repeated in successive editions of the *Large Minutes*, is most pertinent and valuable: 'Does not talking of a justified or a sanctified *state* tend to mislead men? almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God according to our works; according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behaviour.' Am I at this moment by the grace of God free from every sinful thought and temper? If I am not, I may be, if I will but trust in Christ. I will not be anxious for the morrow; let it care for its own things when they come; and the God who saves me now from all sin will surely save me then, if I continue to trust on Him.

fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.'

18. 'But does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously?' Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in some, I mean in this sense,—they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously, that the Lord should destroy sin 'by the breath of His mouth,' in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so He generally does, a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou* therefore look for it every moment! Look for it in the way above described; in all those *good works* whereunto thou art 'created anew in Christ Jesus.' There is then no danger: you can be no worse, if you are no better, for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope: it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it then every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by this token you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first, before* you are sanctified.

18. Wesley at this time was not quite free from the conception of entire sanctification as a step up from a permanently lower to a permanently higher level; an advance to a higher state; though, as the *Minute* above quoted shows, he came to see the mischief of this view. Hence his hesitation to say definitely that it is an instantaneous work. Of course it is, and must be, an instantaneous work; a deliverance this moment from all sin; but it is not necessarily or usually the beginning of a state of entire sanctification, from which there are no relapses. He never quite shook off the fallacious notion that sin is a *thing* which has

to be taken out of a man, like a cancer or a rotten tooth; and so in *Minutes*, 1768, he says, 'From the moment we are justified there may be a gradual sanctification, or a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin ceases before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change. There must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not.' But sin is not a thing; it is a condition of balance amongst our motives. As long as by faith we realize the presence of Christ through the indwelling Spirit, the balance will always tip the right

You think, I must first *be* or *do* thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you seek it by faith, you may expect it *as you are* ; and if as you are, then expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe, that there is an inseparable connexion between these three points,—expect it *by faith* ; expect it *as you are* ; and expect it *now*. To deny one of them, is to deny them all , to allow one, is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith ? Be true then to your principle , and look for this blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse ; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but ‘ Christ *died*.’ And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing : why should you ? Christ is ready ; and He is all you want. He is waiting for you He is at the door ! Let your inmost soul cry out,

Come in, come in, Thou heavenly Guest !  
Nor hence again remove ;  
But sup with me, and let the feast  
Be everlasting love.

way ; but if we once let our faith fail, the motives which, though innocent in themselves, tend under certain circumstances to sin, will once more prevail. And as long as we are in the body, those motives will always be present. No one can expect that the grace of God will free him from the feeling of hunger, or thirst, or sex, or weariness, or from the delight in beautiful sights and sounds, or the pleasure of gratified curiosity ; and all these may, and often are, motives to sin. But we may hope and be certain that the sense of God’s indwelling presence

will *now*, and *now*, and again *now* overbalance them, so that they have no power over us ; and these ‘ *nows* ’ will become, as we grow in grace and faith, a practically continuous chain. Let us listen to Wesley’s wise counsel : ‘ Expect it *by faith*, expect it *as you are*, and expect it *now*.’ Why not ?

The verse is the last in C. Wesley’s hymn of fourteen verses in *Hymns on God’s Everlasting Love* (1741). Four verses, including this, form Hymn 291 in the present Hymn-Book. The original is ‘ Come quickly in, Thou heavenly Guest.’

## SERMON LI

### THE GOOD STEWARD

THIS sermon was first published in 1768 at Newcastle, doubtless during Wesley's visit to that city after his return from Scotland in the latter part of May. It is entitled *The Good Steward; a Sermon*. By John Wesley, M.A., Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Countess Dowager of Buchan. It was republished in the same year in London, in Leeds, and in Bristol; and was inserted in the collected *Works* in 1771 immediately after the *Standard Sermons*.

The Earls of Buchan, a branch of the family of Comyn, played a conspicuous part in the history of Scotland. Their domains lay north-east of Aberdeen, along the coast up to Moray Firth. The Earl of Buchan was one of the Council of Regency in 1286 on the death of Alexander III; but he himself died the same year, and his son John steadily supported Edward I of England in his claim to the overlordship of Scotland. Bruce defeated him at Inverury in 1310, and

Gert his men burn all Bouchane  
Fra end till end, and sparit nane;  
And heryit them on sic maner,  
That efter that, neir fifty yheir,  
Men menyit the heirschip of Bouchane.

(Barbour's *Bruce*, ix). His Countess, however, was a Macduff; and in spite of her husband, she exercised the hereditary privilege of her clan and went to Scone in 1306 to crown John Baliol; in revenge for which patriotic act Edward I caused her to be hung up in a cage outside one of the towers of Berwick Castle. In the reign of Henry VII the then Earl of Buchan, 'Hearty James,' as he was nicknamed, entered into a plot in 1491 to dethrone James III, and to hand over his heir, James IV, to England; which happily failed. Henry David, the tenth Earl, succeeded his father in 1745. He married Agnes, daughter of Sir James Stewart, of Goodtrees, near Edinburgh, the Solicitor-General for Scotland. He came with his lady to Bath on account of his health, and there, through the influence of the Countess of Huntingdon, heard the preaching of Whitefield, Wesley, Fletcher, and other Methodists in her ladyship's chapel, and became converted

to their views. He died there on December 1, 1767, in the full triumph of faith at the age of fifty-eight. His body lay in state in the Countess's chapel for five days, on each of which two sermons were preached by Whitefield and others; and was then taken to Scotland for burial. The young earl, who had also been converted, appointed, by the advice of Lady Huntingdon, Mr. Venn, Mr. Fletcher, and Mr. Berridge as his chaplains; he was twenty-four years of age, and lived till 1829 a life of quiet literary retirement. The Dowager Countess returned to Edinburgh, probably to her old home at Goodtrees, and, on the recommendation of the Countess of Huntingdon, appointed Wesley as her chaplain. He seems to have 'read himself in' with this sermon, which is dated May 14, 1768, and was doubtless preached before his noble patroness in Edinburgh on the following day, Sunday, in the evening. He says: 'In the evening our house was sufficiently crowded, even with the rich and honourable.' One of the congregation was doubtless Lady Maxwell, who had found peace a week or two before, and was a member of the Methodist Society in Edinburgh. The 'House' was the Octagon Chapel in Low Calton, the foundation stone of which had been laid by Wesley on April 24, 1765; it has disappeared to make room for street improvements, and was replaced by the chapel in Nicolson Square. Wesley wrote to thank Lady Huntingdon for her share in securing him this honour. Both Tyerman and Butler date the letter correctly January 4, but others give June 4. This mistake in the date has led to a confusion between the young earl's appointments of his three chaplains and the Countess's appointment of Wesley as her chaplain. See *W.H.S. Proceedings*, vol. x. p. 91.

As to the exposition of the text, it is plain that the parable has to do primarily with the proper use by Christians of worldly wealth; Wesley not unjustifiably extends it to cover all our human powers and talents, and this involves him in a little difficulty when he comes to his second division (ii. 12) and the interpretation of 'Thou mayest be no longer steward.' He finds himself compelled to say of the powers which we shall retain after death, 'The things continue, but our stewardship does not.' Surely we shall still be in the same relation of responsibility to God for their use in the future life as in the present.

The speculations as to the future state in section ii. are interesting, and should be compared with Wesley's last words on this subject in the sermon on Faith (No. CXXII) written on January 17, 1791, only six weeks before he passed into the fuller life of heaven. He there conjectures that the spirits of believers may be permitted to minister to their friends still in the body; that they will swiftly increase in knowledge, holiness, and happiness; that they will forget nothing; that they will have new powers of perception and movement, 'swifter

than the light'; and that they will know one another. 'Indeed, sceptics may ask, "How do disembodied spirits know each other?" I answer plainly, I cannot tell; but I am certain that they do.'

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*Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.*—LUKE xvi. 2.

1. THE relation which man bears to God, the creature to his Creator, is exhibited to us in the oracles of God under various representations. Considered as a sinner, a fallen creature, he is there represented as a debtor to his Creator. He is also frequently represented as a servant, which indeed is essential to him as a creature, insomuch that this appellation is given to the Son of God when, in His state of humiliation, He 'took upon Him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.'

2. But no character more exactly agrees with the present state of man, than that of a steward. Our blessed Lord frequently represents him as such; and there is a peculiar propriety in the representation. It is only in one particular respect, namely, as he is a sinner, that he is styled a debtor; and when he is styled a servant, the appellation is general and indeterminate: but a steward is a servant of a particular kind, such a one as man is in all respects. This appellation is exactly expressive of his situation in the present world: specifying what kind of servant he is to God, and what kind of service his Divine Master expects from him.

It may be of use, then, to consider this point thoroughly, and to make our full improvement of it. In order to this, let us, first, inquire, in what respects we are now God's stewards. Let us, secondly, observe, that when He requires our souls of us, we 'can be no longer stewards.' It will then only remain, as we may, in the third place, observe, to 'give an account of our stewardship.'

I. 1. And, first, we are to inquire, in what respects we are now God's stewards. We are now indebted to Him for all we have, but although a debtor is obliged to return what he

has received, yet until the time of payment comes, he is at liberty to use it as he pleases. It is not so with a steward ; he is not at liberty to use what is lodged in his hands as *he* pleases, but as his master pleases. He has no right to dispose of anything which is in his hands, but according to the will of his lord. For he is not the proprietor of any of these things, but barely entrusted with them by another , and entrusted on this express condition,—that he shall dispose of all as his master orders. Now, this is exactly the case of every man, with relation to God. We are not at liberty to use what He has lodged in our hands as *we* please, but as He pleases who alone is the possessor of heaven and earth, and the Lord of every creature. We have no right to dispose of anything we have, but according to His will, seeing we are not proprietors of any of these things , they are all, as our Lord speaks, *ἀλλότρια*, *belonging to another person* , nor is anything properly *our own*, in the land of our pilgrimage. We shall not receive *τὰ ἴδια*, *our own things*, till we come to our own country. Eternal things only are our own : with all these temporal things we are barely entrusted by another, the Disposer and Lord of all. And He entrusts us with them on this express condition,—that we use them only as our Master's goods, and according to the particular directions which He has given us in His Word.

2. On this condition He hath entrusted us with our souls, our bodies, our goods, and whatever other talents we have received : but in order to impress this weighty truth on our hearts, it will be needful to come to particulars.

And, first, God has entrusted us with our soul, an immortal spirit, made in the image of God ; together with all the powers and faculties thereof, understanding, imagination, memory, will, and a train of affections, either included in it or closely dependent upon it,—love and hatred, joy and sorrow, respecting present good and evil ; desire and aversion, hope and fear, respecting that which is to come. All these St. Paul seems to include in two words, when he says, ' The peace of

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I. par. 2. The passage quoted it may be paraphrased, ' The peace (Phil. iv. 7) is one of great interest ; of God which is better than all the

God shall keep your hearts and minds.' Perhaps, indeed, the latter word, *νοήματα*, might rather be rendered *thoughts*, provided we take that word in its most extensive sense, for every perception of the mind, whether active or passive.

3. Now, of all these, it is certain, we are only stewards. God has entrusted us with these powers and faculties, not that we may employ them according to our own will, but according to the express orders which He has given us; although it is true that, in doing His will, we most effectually secure our own happiness, seeing it is herein only that we can be happy, either in time or in eternity. Thus we are to use our understanding, our imagination, our memory, wholly to the glory of Him that gave them. Thus our will is to be wholly given up to Him, and all our affections to be regulated as He directs. We are to love and hate, to rejoice and grieve, to desire and shun, to hope and fear, according to the rule which He prescribes whose we are, and whom we are to serve in all things. Even our thoughts are not our own, in this sense, they are not at our own disposal, but for every deliberate motion of our mind we are accountable to our great Master.

4. God has, secondly, entrusted us with our bodies (those exquisitely wrought machines, so 'fearfully and wonderfully made'), with all the powers and members thereof. He has entrusted us with the organs of sense; of sight, hearing, and the rest: but none of these are given us as our own, to be employed according to our own will. None of these are lent us in such a sense as to leave us at liberty to use them as we please for a season. No: we have received them on these very terms,—that, as long as they abide with us, we should

processes of human reasoning shall stand sentry over your hearts, and the thoughts which proceed from them, in your union with Christ Jesus.' Compare Col. iii. 15: 'Let the peace of Christ act as umpire in your hearts.' The test of the rightness of our thoughts is their effect on our sense of peace with God;

whatever interferes with that is wrong.

4. 'Fearfully and wonderfully made.' The mystery of the formation of the body fills the Psalmist with awe and amazement. So Browning, in 'James Lee's Wife,' viii. 1, exclaims of the beauty of the human hand, 'How free, how fine! To fear, almost!'

employ them all in that very manner, and no other, which He appoints.

5. It is on the same terms that He imparted to us that most excellent talent of speech. 'Thou hast given me a tongue,' says the ancient writer, 'that I may praise Thee therewith.' For this purpose was it given to all the children of men,—to be employed in glorifying God. Nothing, therefore, is more ungrateful or more absurd, than to think or say, 'Our tongues are our own.' That cannot be, unless we have created ourselves, and so are independent on the Most High. Nay, but 'it is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves'; the manifest consequence is, that He is still Lord over us, in this as in all other respects. It follows, that there is not a word of our tongue for which we are not accountable to Him.

6. To Him we are equally accountable for the use of our hands and feet, and all the members of our body. These are so many talents which are committed to our trust, until the time appointed by the Father. Until then, we have the use of all these, but as stewards, not as proprietors, to the end we should 'render them, not as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but as instruments of righteousness unto God.'

7. God has entrusted us, thirdly, with a portion of worldly goods, with food to eat, raiment to put on, and a place where to lay our head, with not only the necessities, but the conveniences, of life. Above all, He has committed to our charge that precious talent which contains all the rest,—money: indeed it is unspeakably precious, if we are wise and faithful stewards of it; if we employ every part of it for such purposes as our blessed Lord has commanded us to do.

8. God has entrusted us, fourthly, with several talents which do not properly come under any of these heads. Such is bodily strength; such are health, a pleasing person, an

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5. 'Our tongues are our own'; a slight misquotation of Ps. xii. 4. 'Our lips are our own.'

The 'ancient writer' was Augustine. In *Confessions*, v. 1, he speaks

of 'lingua mea, quam formasti et excitasti, ut confiteatur nomini tuo.' Wesley's quotation is not exact, but it is as near to the original as many of his quotations.

agreeable address ; such are learning and knowledge, in their various degrees, with all the other advantages of education. Such is the influence which we have over others, whether by their love and esteem of us, or by power ; power to do them good or hurt, to help or hinder them in the circumstances of life. Add to these, that invaluable talent of time with which God entrusts us from moment to moment. Add, lastly, that on which all the rest depend, and without which they would all be curses, not blessings ; namely, the grace of God, the power of His Holy Spirit, which alone worketh in us all that is acceptable in His sight.

II. 1. In so many respects are the children of men stewards of the Lord, the Possessor of heaven and earth : so large a portion of His goods, of various kinds, hath He committed to their charge. But it is not for ever, nor indeed for any considerable time : we have this trust reposed in us only during the short, uncertain space that we sojourn here below ; only so long as we remain on earth, as this fleeting breath is in our nostrils. The hour is swiftly approaching, it is just at hand, when we ' can be no longer stewards ' ! The moment the body ' returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God that gave it,' we bear that character no more, the time of our stewardship is at an end. Part of those goods wherewith we were before entrusted are now come to an end ; at least, they are so with regard to *us* ; nor are we longer entrusted with them : and that part which remains can no longer be employed or improved as it was before.

2. Part of what we were entrusted with before is at an end, at least with regard to us. What have we to do, after this life, with food, and raiment, and houses, and earthly possessions ? The food of the dead is the dust of the earth, they are clothed only with worms and rottenness. They dwell in the house prepared for all flesh ; their lands know them no more : all their worldly goods are delivered into other hands, and they have ' no more portion under the sun.'

3. The case is the same with regard to the body. The moment the spirit returns to God, we are no longer stewards

of this machine, which is then sown in corruption and dishonour. All the parts and members of which it was composed lie mouldering in the clay. The hands have no longer power to move, the feet have forgot their office; the flesh, sinews, and bones, are all hastening to be dissolved into common dust.

4. Here end also the talents of a mixed nature; our strength, our health, our beauty, our eloquence, and address, our faculty of pleasing or persuading, or convincing others. Here end, likewise, all the honours we once enjoyed, all the power which was lodged in our hands, all the influence which we once had over others, either by the love or the esteem which they bore us. Our love, our hatred, our desire, is perished: none regard how we were once affected toward them. They look upon the dead as neither able to help nor hurt them; so that 'a living dog is better than a dead lion.'

5. Perhaps a doubt may remain concerning some of the other talents wherewith we are now entrusted, whether they will cease to exist when the body returns to dust or only cease to be improvable. Indeed, there is no doubt but the kind of speech which we now use, by means of these bodily organs, will then be entirely at an end, when those organs are destroyed. It is certain, the tongue will no more occasion any vibrations in the air; neither will the ear convey these tremulous motions to the common sensory. Even the *sonus exilis*, the low, shrill voice, which the poet supposes to belong

II. 3. 'This machine.' In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the body is often styled a machine, which, by the way, was pronounced with the accent on the first syllable. So Hamlet (ii. 2, 124) ends his letter to Ophelia, 'Thine evermore, most dear lady, whilst this machine is to him,' i.e. as long as he has this body. Addison, in *Spectator*, 387, says, 'Repinings wear out the machine insensibly.' The modern increase in machinery has given the word a

mechanical connotation; but when Wordsworth says in 'She was a Phantom of Delight,'

And now I see with eye serene,  
The very pulse of the machine,

we must not allow our modern feeling about the word to spoil the poetry of the passage.

5. 'Sensory'; the sensorium or part of the brain that receives and interprets the reports of the senses.

'Sonus exilis'; a shrill sound: the classical poets always represent

to a separate spirit, we cannot allow to have a real being; it is a mere flight of imagination. Indeed, it cannot be questioned, but separate spirits have some way to communicate their sentiments to each other; but what inhabitant of flesh and blood can explain that way? What we term 'speech,' they cannot have: so that we can no longer be stewards of this talent when we are numbered with the dead.

6. It may likewise admit of a doubt, whether our senses will exist, when the organs of sense are destroyed. Is it not probable, that those of the lower kind will cease—the feeling, the smell, the taste—as they have a more immediate reference to the body, and are chiefly, if not wholly, intended for the preservation of it? But will not some kind of sight remain, although the eye be closed in death? And will there not be something in the soul equivalent to the present sense of hearing? Nay, is it not probable, that these will not only exist in the separate state, but exist in a far greater degree, in a more eminent manner, than now, when the soul, disentangled from its clay, is no longer 'a dying sparkle in a cloudy place'; when it no longer 'looks through the windows of the eye and ear', but rather is all eye, all ear, all sense, in a manner we cannot yet conceive? And have we not a clear proof of the possibility of this, of seeing without the use of the eye, and hearing without the use of the ear? yea, and an earnest of it continually? For does not the soul see, in the clearest manner, when the eye is of no use; namely, in dreams? Does she not then

the shades of the dead as speaking in a shrill, squeaking voice. In *Iliad*, xxiii. 101, the soul of Patroclus vanishes beneath the earth like smoke uttering a shrill sound. Virgil (*Aen.* vi. 492) represents the dead as uttering 'vocem exiguam,' a thin sound; Horace (*Sat.* i. 8, 41) calls it 'triste et acutum,' sad and shrill. Quintilian distinguishes between *vox exilis* and *vox plena* (xi. 3, 15).

6. 'A dying sparkle,' &c. The line is from Sir John Davies' *Nosce*

*Terpsum*, i. 66, where the soul is called, 'This dying sparkle, in this cloudy place.' In ii. 54 he says:

Yet in the body's prison, so she lies  
As through the body's windows she must look

and in i. 58 he speaks of this life, 'When error chokes the windows of the mind,' which in line 65 he defines as 'the eye and ear.' Wesley reprinted this poem in part in *Moral and Sacred Poems*, vol. i. p. 15. Compare Sermon CXXII, 7.

enjoy the faculty of hearing, without any help from the ear? But however this be, certain it is, that neither will our senses, any more than our speech, be entrusted to us in the manner they are now, when the body lies in the silent grave.

7. How far the knowledge or learning which we have gained by education will then remain, we cannot tell. Solomon indeed says, 'There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.' But it is evident, these words cannot be understood in an absolute sense. For it is so far from being true that there is no knowledge after we have quitted the body, that the doubt lies on the other side, whether there be any such thing as real knowledge till then; whether it be not a plain sober truth, not a mere poetical fiction, that

All these shadows, which for things we take,  
Are but the empty dreams, which in death's sleep we make;

only excepting those things which God Himself has been pleased to reveal to man. I will speak for one. After having sought for truth, with some diligence, for half a century, I am, at this day, hardly sure of anything but what I learn from the Bible. Nay, I positively affirm, I know nothing else so certainly, that I would dare to stake my salvation upon it.

So much, however, we may learn from Solomon's words, that 'there is no' such 'knowledge or wisdom in the grave,' as will be of any use to an unhappy spirit: 'there is no device' there, whereby he can now improve those talents with which he was once entrusted. For time is no more; the time of our trial for everlasting happiness or misery is past. Our day, the day of man, is over; the day of salvation

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7. Solomon did not say this, but the author of Ecclesiastes, who was one of the latest writers in the Old Testament. His pessimistic utterances are the true record of his philosophic thought, unenlightened by the gospel which brought life and

immortality to light; and they cannot be taken as having any authority for us as against the teaching of our Lord.

The lines quoted are from Abraham Cowley's *Life*, 34. The first line is in the original 'Whilst all these

is ended ! Nothing now remains but ' the day of the Lord,' ushering in wide, unchangeable eternity !

8. But still, our souls, being incorruptible and immortal, of a nature ' little lower than the angels ' (even if we are to understand that phrase of our original nature, which may well admit of a doubt), when our bodies are mouldered into earth, will remain with all their faculties. Our memory, our understanding, will be so far from being destroyed, yea, or impaired, by the dissolution of the body, that, on the contrary, we have reason to believe, they will be inconceivably strengthened. Have we not the clearest reason to believe, that they will then be wholly freed from those defects which now naturally result from the union of the soul with the corruptible body ? It is highly probable, that, from the time these are disunited, our memory will let nothing slip ; yea, that it will faithfully exhibit everything to our view which was ever committed to it. It is true, that the invisible world is, in Scripture, termed ' the land of forgetfulness ', or, as it is still more strongly expressed in the old translation, ' the land where all things are forgotten.' They are forgotten ; but by whom ? Not by the inhabitants of that land, but by the inhabitants of the earth. It is with regard to them that the unseen world is ' the land of forgetfulness.' All things therein are too frequently

shadows, that for things we take.' The poem is reprinted in Wesley's *Moral and Sacred Poems*, i. 42.

' Unchangeable eternity ' ; a rhetorical flourish. Wesley himself in Sermon CXXII, 6, expresses his belief that after death ' human spirits swiftly increase in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness.'

8. The passage in Ps. viii. 5, runs in the R.V., ' Thou hast made him but little lower than God,' and certainly refers to the original creation of man. Wesley suggests that man became ' a little lower than the angels ' through the Fall, but that is not what the Psalmist meant.

' The land of forgetfulness ' ; so the A.V. The old translation, by which Wesley means the Prayer-Book Version, has ' the land where all things are forgotten.' This attempt to interpret the passage so as not to imply that the dead have no memory, is forced and wrong. The Psalmist believed that the dead had passed into the dust and unconsciousness of Sheol, and had forgotten everything. But all these Old Testament passages about death must be modified in the light of the teaching of Christ ; they cannot be forced into agreement with it.

forgotten by these ; but not by disembodied spirits. From the time they have put off the earthly tabernacle, we can hardly think they forget anything.

9. In like manner, the understanding will, doubtless, be freed from the defects that are now inseparable from it. For many ages it has been an unquestioned maxim, *Humanum est errare et nescire*: ignorance and mistake are inseparable from human nature. But the whole of this assertion is only true with regard to living men, and holds no longer than while 'the corruptible body presses down the soul.' Ignorance, indeed, belongs to every finite understanding (seeing there is none beside God that knoweth all things); but not mistake: when the body is laid aside, this also is laid aside, for ever.

10. What then can we say of an ingenious man, who has lately made a discovery, that disembodied spirits have not only no senses (not even sight or hearing), but no memory or understanding, no thought or perception; not so much as a consciousness of their own existence! that they are in a dead sleep from death to the resurrection! *Consanguineus lethi sopor* indeed! Such a sleep we may call 'a near kinsman of death,' if it be not the same thing. What can we say, but that ingenious men have strange dreams, and these they sometimes mistake for realities?

11. But to return. As the soul will retain its understanding and memory, notwithstanding the dissolution of the

9. 'Humanum est,' &c.: a well-known old Latin proverb.

'This corruptible body,' &c.: Wisdom ix. 15; often quoted by Wesley.

Surely there is no proof or likelihood that all ignorance will be laid aside in the future life; otherwise, as Wesley implies, we should have to become infinite in knowledge.

10. The Psychopannuchia, or sleep of the soul between death and the resurrection, has always had its advocates, from the days of the Fathers until now. I have not

satisfied myself yet as to the identity of this 'ingenious man'; one Simonetti published in 1758 a book *Ueber dem Schlaf der Seelen*; but Wesley does not mention his name anywhere, and it is doubtful whether he would be likely to see his volume. Cf. Abraham Tucker's *Light of Nature Pursued*.

'Consanguineus lethi sopor'—sleep akin to death; the phrase is quoted from Virgil, *Aeneid*, vi. 278; Virgil in turn borrowed it from Homer, *Iliad*, xiv. 231, 'Ενθ' ὕπνῳ Σύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ θανάτοιο.

body, so undoubtedly the will, including all the affections, will remain in its full vigour. If our love or anger, our hope or desire, perish, it is only with regard to those whom we leave behind. To them it matters not, whether they were the objects of our love or hate, of our desire or aversion. But in separate spirits themselves we have no reason to believe that any of these are extinguished. It is more probable, that they work with far greater force, than while the soul was clogged with flesh and blood.

12. But although all these, although both our knowledge and senses, our memory and understanding, together with our will, our love, hate, and all our affections, remain after the body is dropped off; yet, in this respect, they are as though they were not—we are no longer stewards of them. The things continue, but our stewardship does not—we no more act in that capacity. Even the grace which was formerly entrusted with us, in order to enable us to be faithful and wise stewards, is now no longer entrusted for that purpose. The days of our stewardship are ended.

III. 1. It now remains, that, being no longer stewards, we give an account of our stewardship. Some have imagined, this is to be done immediately after death, as soon as we enter into the world of spirits. Nay, the Church of Rome does absolutely assert this; yea, makes it an article of faith. And thus much we may allow, the moment a soul drops the body, and stands naked before God, it cannot but know what its portion will be to all eternity. It will have full in its view,

11. 'To them it matters not,' &c. : a cold-blooded view of the case. Surely if love remains for ever, it will include the love of those whom we leave behind.

12. 'We are no longer stewards.' But see Introduction.

III. 1. The Romish doctrine is that immediately after death the souls of those who have already attained saintliness will be admitted to heaven; those who have died in

the faith, but are still imperfect, will go to purgatory to be prepared there for admission into heaven when they are sufficiently purified; the souls of the wicked go at once into hell. Wesley believed that the eternal destiny of every man is fixed at death, but that the formal judgement will take place at the second coming of our Lord. See Sermon XLVIII and notes thereon.

either everlasting joy, or everlasting torment, as it is no longer possible for us to be deceived in the judgement which we pass upon ourselves. But the Scripture gives us no reason to believe, that God will then sit in judgement upon us. There is no passage in all the oracles of God which affirms any such thing. That which has been frequently alleged for this purpose seems rather to prove the contrary; namely (Heb. ix. 27), 'It is appointed for men once to die, and after this the judgement': for, in all reason, the word 'once' is here to be applied to judgement as well as death. So that the fair inference to be drawn from this very text is, not that there are two judgements, a particular and a general; but that we are to be judged, as well as to die, once only: not once immediately after death, and again after the general resurrection; but then only 'when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all His holy angels with Him.' The imagination therefore of one judgement at death, and another at the end of the world, can have no place with those who make the written Word of God the whole and sole standard of their faith.

2. The time then when we are to give this account is, when the 'great white throne comes down from heaven, and He that sitteth thereon, from whose face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there is found no place for them.' It is then 'the dead, small and great, will stand before God; and the books will be opened': the book of Scripture, to them who were entrusted therewith, the book of conscience to all mankind. The 'book of remembrance,' likewise (to use another scriptural expression), which had been writing from the foundation of the world, will then be laid open to the view of all the children of men. Before all these, even the whole human race, before the devil and his angels, before an innumerable company of holy angels, and before God the Judge of all, thou wilt appear, without any shelter or covering, without any possibility of disguise, to give a particular account of the manner wherein thou hast employed all thy Lord's goods!

3. The Judge of all will then inquire, 'How didst thou employ thy soul? I entrusted thee with an immortal spirit,

endowed with various powers and faculties, with understanding, imagination, memory, will, affections. I gave thee withal full and express directions, how all these were to be employed. Didst thou employ thy understanding, as far as it was capable, according to those directions ; namely, in the knowledge of thyself and Me—My nature, My attributes, My works, whether of creation, of providence, or of grace?—in acquainting thyself with My Word—in using every means to increase thy knowledge thereof, in meditating thereon day and night ? Didst thou employ thy memory, according to My will, in treasuring up whatever knowledge thou hadst acquired, which might conduce to My glory, to thy own salvation, or the advantage of others ? Didst thou store up therein, not things of no value, but whatever instruction thou hadst learned from My Word , and whatever experience thou hadst gained of My wisdom, truth, power, and mercy ? Was thy imagination employed, not in painting vain images, much less such as nourished “ foolish and hurtful desires ” ; but in representing to thee whatever would profit thy soul, and awaken thy pursuit of wisdom and holiness ? Didst thou follow My directions with regard to thy will ? Was it wholly given up to Me ? Was it swallowed up in Mine, so as never to oppose, but always run parallel with it ? Were thy affections placed and regulated in such a manner, as I appointed in My Word ? Didst thou give Me thy heart ? Didst thou not love the world, neither the things of the world ? Was I the object of thy love ? Was all thy desire unto Me, and unto the remembrance of My name ? Was I the joy of thy heart, the delight of thy soul, the chief among ten thousand ? Didst thou sorrow for nothing, but what grieved My Spirit ? Didst thou fear and hate nothing but sin ? Did the whole stream of thy affections flow back to the ocean from whence they came ? Were thy thoughts employed according to My will—not in ranging to the ends of the earth, not on folly, or sin ; but on “ whatsoever things were pure, whatsoever things were holy ” ; on whatsoever was conducive to My glory, and to “ peace and goodwill among men ” ? ’

4. Thy Lord will then inquire, 'How didst thou employ the body wherewith I entrusted thee? I gave thee a tongue to praise Me therewith: didst thou use it to the end for which it was given? Didst thou employ it, not in evil speaking or idle speaking, not in uncharitable or unprofitable conversation: but in such as was good, as was necessary or useful either to thyself or others—such as always tended, directly or indirectly, to "minister grace to the hearers"? I gave thee, together with thy other senses, those grand avenues of knowledge, sight, and hearing: were these employed to those excellent purposes for which they were bestowed upon thee—in bringing thee in more and more instruction in righteousness and true holiness? I gave thee hands and feet, and various members, wherewith to perform the works which were prepared for thee: were they employed, not in doing "the will of the flesh," of thy evil nature; or the will of the mind (the things to which thy reason or fancy led thee); but "the will of Him that sent" thee into the world, merely to work out thy own salvation? Didst thou present all thy members, not to sin, as instruments of unrighteousness, but to Me alone, through the Son of My love, "as instruments of righteousness"?'

5. The Lord of all will next inquire, 'How didst thou employ the worldly goods which I lodged in thy hands? Didst thou use thy food, not so as to seek or place thy happiness therein, but so as to preserve the body in health, in strength and vigour, a fit instrument for the soul? Didst thou use apparel, not to nourish pride or vanity, much less to tempt others to sin, but conveniently and decently to defend thyself from the injuries of the weather? Didst thou prepare and use thy house, and all other conveniences, with a single eye to My glory—in every point seeking not thy own honour, but Mine; studying to please, not thyself, but Me? Once more: in what manner didst thou employ that comprehensive talent, money?—not in gratifying the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, or the pride of life; not squandering it away in vain expenses—the same as throwing it into the sea, not hoarding it up to leave behind thee—the same as

burying it in the earth, but first supplying thy own reasonable wants, together with those of thy family; then restoring the remainder to Me, through the poor, whom I had appointed to receive it, looking upon thyself as only one of that number of poor, whose wants were to be supplied out of that part of My substance which I had placed in thy hands for this purpose; leaving thee the right of being supplied first, and the blessedness of giving rather than receiving? Wast thou accordingly a general benefactor to mankind? feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, comforting the sick, assisting the stranger, relieving the afflicted, according to their various necessities? Wast thou eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a father to the fatherless, and an husband to the widow? And didst thou labour to improve all outward works of mercy, as means of saving souls from death?'

6. Thy Lord will farther inquire, 'Hast thou been a wise and faithful steward with regard to the talents of a mixed nature which I lent thee? Didst thou employ thy health and strength, not in folly or sin, not in the pleasures which perished in the using, "not in making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the desires thereof," but in a vigorous pursuit of that better part which none could take away from thee? Didst thou employ whatever was pleasing in thy person or address, whatever advantages thou hadst by education, whatever share of learning, whatever knowledge of things or men, was committed to thee, for the promoting of virtue in the world, for the enlargement of My kingdom? Didst thou employ whatever share of power thou hadst, whatever influence over others, by the love or esteem of thee which they had conceived, for the increase of their wisdom and holiness? Didst thou employ that inestimable talent of time, with wariness and circumspection, as duly weighing the value of every moment, and knowing that all were numbered in eternity? Above all, wast thou a good steward of My grace, preventing, accompanying, and following thee? Didst thou duly observe, and carefully improve, all the influences of My Spirit—every

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6. 'Spirit of bondage'; see Sermon IX and notes.

good desire, every measure of light, all His sharp or gentle reproofs? How didst thou profit by "the Spirit of bondage and fear," which was previous to "the Spirit of adoption"? And when thou wast made a partaker of this Spirit, crying in thy heart, "Abba, Father," didst thou stand fast in the glorious liberty wherewith I made thee free? Didst thou from thenceforth present thy soul and body, all thy thoughts, thy words, and actions, in one flame of love, as a holy sacrifice, glorifying Me with thy body and thy spirit? Then "well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"!'

And what will remain, either to the faithful or unfaithful steward? Nothing but the execution of that sentence which has been passed by the righteous Judge; fixing thee in a state which admits of no change through everlasting ages! It remains only that thou be rewarded, to all eternity, according to thy works.

IV. 1. From these plain considerations we may learn, first, How important is this short, uncertain day of life! How precious, above all utterance, above all conception, is every portion of it!

The least of these a serious care demands;  
For though they're little, they are golden sands!

How deeply does it concern every child of man, to let none of these run to waste; but to improve them all to the noblest purposes, as long as the breath of God is in his nostrils!

2. We learn from hence, secondly, that there is no employment of our time, no action or conversation, that is purely indifferent. All is good or bad, because all our time, as everything we have, is not our own. All these are, as our Lord speaks, τὰ ἀλλότρια—the *property of another*; of God our Creator. Now, these either are or are not

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IV. 1. The lines are quoted from Gambold's verses 'Upon List'ning to the Vibrations of a Clock,' reprinted by Wesley in *Moral and Sacred*

*Poems*, vol. iii. p. 195. The second line in the original is, 'For tho' they're little, yet they're golden sands.'

employed according to His will. If they are so employed, all is good ; if they are not, all is evil. Again : it is His will, that we should continually grow in grace, and in the living knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, every thought, word, and work, whereby this knowledge is increased, whereby we grow in grace, is good ; and every one whereby this knowledge is not increased, is truly and properly evil.

3. We learn from hence, thirdly, that there are no works of supererogation , that we can never do more than our duty ; seeing all we have is not our own, but God's , all we can do is due to Him. We have not received this or that, or many things only, but everything from Him : therefore, everything is His due. He that gives us all, must needs have a right to all : so that if we pay Him anything less than all, we cannot be faithful stewards. And considering, 'every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour,' we cannot be wise stewards unless we labour to the uttermost of our power , not leaving anything undone which we possibly can do, but putting forth all our strength.

4. Brethren, 'who is an understanding man and endued with knowledge among you?' Let him show the wisdom from above, by walking suitably to his character. If he so account of himself as a steward of the manifold gifts of God, let him see that all his thoughts, and words, and works, be agreeable to the post God has assigned him. It is no small thing, to lay out for God all which you have received

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3. 'Works of supererogation'—*opera supererogationis*. By these the Church of Rome means such good deeds as aim at achieving the counsels of perfection recommended though not imposed by our Lord ; such as vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. By performing these the saints acquire merit, which can be applied as a sort of atonement for the sins and failures of the mere average Christian. The Protestant view has always been that 'there

can be no such thing as overpassing the limits of obligation.' If a man feels that he ought to take a vow of chastity or celibacy, then it is his duty to take it, and there is no merit in doing his duty. The whole tendency of the doctrine is mischievous, for it condones a life of imperfect service and obedience, and makes the pursuit of holiness in its highest degree an optional matter.

from God. It requires all your wisdom, all your resolution, all your patience and constancy ; far more than ever you had by nature, but not more than you may have by grace. For His grace is sufficient for you ; and ‘ all things,’ you know, ‘ are possible to him that believeth.’ By faith, then, ‘ put on the Lord Jesus Christ ’ ; ‘ put on the whole armour of God ’ , and you shall be enabled to glorify Him in all your words and works ; yea, to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ !

EDINBURGH, *May* 14, 1768.

## SERMON LII

PREACHED BEFORE THE SOCIETY FOR REFORMATION OF  
MANNERS, ON SUNDAY, JANUARY 30, 1763, AT THE  
CHAPEL IN WEST STREET, SEVEN DIALS.

IN 1677 a number of young men who had been influenced by the preaching of Dr. Anthony Horneck of the Savoy Chapel, Dr. Smithies of St. Michael's, Cornhill, and Dr. William Beveridge of St. Peter's, Cornhill, afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, formed themselves into a religious society, meeting once a week for prayer and Christian conference. They also made a weekly collection which they applied to the relief of poor families, debtors, orphans, and others. In the reign of James II they fell under suspicion and had to hold their meetings more or less secretly; but at the Revolution of 1689 their numbers greatly increased, and in 1691 they organized themselves for the suppression of public vice, procured a letter from Queen Mary through Archbishop Tillotson requiring the magistrates to enforce the laws against swearing, drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, &c., and secured the patronage of the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City. They published and distributed a summary of the laws against vice and profanity, and drew up rules for the conviction of offenders. The result of their efforts was that several Sunday markets were abolished, music-halls and brothels were closed, many offenders were convicted, and above 2,000 prostitutes and keepers of brothels were brought before the courts and punished. A sermon was preached annually before the society, and the preacher in 1698 was Samuel Wesley, the father of John and Charles. The sermon was preached on February 13, in St. James's, Westminster, and repeated at St. Bride's, Fleet Street. The text was Ps. xciv. 16; the sermon was printed in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1814, p. 648. The divisions are (I) That it is difficult to persuade men to engage in the cause of God against wicked persons. (II) That it is the duty of good men to oppose vice and wickedness. Under the second head are three subdivisions: (1) That good men ought to oppose vice and wickedness; (2) that they should do this with united counsels; (3) and with the utmost zeal and prudence. Then come some practical inferences: (1) That

we should reprove those who encourage wickedness—and under this head there is a vigorous attack on the ‘infamous theatres’; (2) that the members of the society should apply the same prudence and zeal to the regulation of their own conduct as to that of others.

The society continued its work until 1730, when it became defunct. But it was revived in 1757, the father of the movement being, according to Wesley’s testimony in his *Journal*, February 2, 1766, Mr. W. Welsh. The history of it is given in this sermon (I) and need not be repeated; and the note at the end of the sermon tells of its disastrous termination. Wesley preached the annual sermon in 1763 at the West Street Chapel (for the history of which see introduction to Sermon XLIX), and took the same text as his father had chosen sixty-five years before. On January 17 he had retired to Lewisham, doubtless to the house of his friend, Mr. Blackwell, to write the sermon; and he published it as a sixpenny pamphlet in the course of the year, and embodied it in the fourth volume of the Sermons in the *Works* of 1771. It is well worth the study of all those who are engaged in social reform.

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*Who will rise up with me against the wicked?—Ps. xciv. 16.*

1. IN all ages, men who neither feared God nor regarded man have combined together, and formed confederacies, to carry on the works of darkness. And herein they have shown themselves wise in their generation, for by this means they more effectually promoted the kingdom of their father the devil, than otherwise they could have done. On the other hand, men who did fear God, and desire the happiness of their fellow creatures, have, in every age, found it needful to join together, in order to oppose the works of darkness, to spread the knowledge of God their Saviour, and to promote His kingdom upon earth. Indeed He Himself has instructed them so to do. From the time that men were upon the earth, He hath taught them to join together in His service, and has united them in one body by one Spirit. And for this very end He has joined them together, ‘that He might destroy the works of the devil’; first in them that are already united, and by them in all that are round about them.

2. This is the original design of the church of Christ. It is a body of men compacted together, in order, first, to

save each his own soul ; then to assist each other in working out their salvation , and, afterwards, as far as in them lies, to save all men from present and future misery, to overturn the kingdom of Satan, and set up the kingdom of Christ. And this ought to be the continued care and endeavour of every member of His Church ; otherwise he is not worthy to be called a member thereof, as he is not a living member of Christ.

3. Accordingly, this ought to be the constant care and endeavour of all those who are united together in these kingdoms, and are commonly called, *The Church of England*. They are united together for this very end, to oppose the devil and all his works, and to wage war against the world and the flesh, his constant and faithful allies. But do they, in fact, answer the end of their union ? Are all who style themselves ‘members of the Church of England’ heartily engaged in opposing the works of the devil, and fighting against the world and the flesh ? Alas ! we cannot say this. So far from it, that a great part, I fear the greater part of them, are themselves *the world*,—the people that know not God to any saving purpose ; are indulging, day by day, instead of ‘mortifying, the flesh, with its affections and desires’ ; and doing, themselves, those works of the devil, which they are peculiarly engaged to destroy.

4. There is, therefore, still need, even in this Christian country (as we *courteously* style Great Britain), yea, in this Christian Church (if we may give that title to the bulk of our nation), of some to ‘rise up against the wicked,’ and join together ‘against the evil doers.’ Nay, there was never more need than there is at this day for them ‘that fear the Lord to speak often together’ on this very head, how they may ‘lift up a standard against the iniquity’ which overflows the land. There is abundant cause for all the servants of God to join together against the works of the devil , with united hearts and counsels and endeavours to make a stand for God, and to repress, as much as in them lies, these ‘floods of ungodliness.’

5. For this end a few persons in London, towards the

close of the last century united together, and, after a while, were termed, *The Society for Reformation of Manners*, and incredible good was done by them for near forty years. But then, most of the original members being gone to their reward, those who succeeded them grew faint in their mind, and departed from the work: so that a few years ago the Society ceased; nor did any of the kind remain in the kingdom.

6. It is a Society of the same nature which has been lately formed. I purpose to show, first, the nature of their design, and the steps they have hitherto taken: secondly, the excellency of it; with the various objections which have been raised against it: thirdly, what manner of men they ought to be who engage in such a design: and, fourthly, with what spirit, and in what manner, they should proceed in the prosecution of it. I shall conclude with an application both to them, and to all that fear God.

I. 1. I am, first, to show the nature of their design, and the steps they have hitherto taken.

It was on a Lord's day, in August, 1757, that, in a small company who were met for prayer and religious conversation, mention was made of the gross and open profanation of that sacred day, by persons buying and selling, keeping open shop, tippling in alehouses, and standing or sitting in the streets, roads, or fields, vending their wares as on common days; especially in Moorfields, which was then full of them

I. par. 1. Moorfields: a low-lying, marshy piece of ground to the immediate north of the old city wall of London, between Bishopsgate and Cripplegate. In 1415 Moorgate was broken through to give access to it. In 1527 it was partially drained, but continued to be 'a rotten, moorish ground, crossed with deep stinking ditches,' until about 1606, when it was laid out in walks, and became a popular summer resort of the citizens. It

began to be built over after the Great Fire, but a large part of it was still unoccupied, and remained a place of common resort for pleasure-seekers, especially of the lower orders. Whitefield began open-air preaching in London at Moorfields on April 29, 1739; and when Wesley returned from Bristol, he followed his example, and we read of congregations of twenty, thirty, and even fifty thousand listening to his addresses there. At the north end

every Sunday, from one end to the other. It was considered, what method could be taken to redress these grievances; and it was agreed, that six of them should, in the morning, wait upon Sir John Fielding for instruction. They did so: he approved of the design, and directed them how to carry it into execution.

2. They first delivered petitions to the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen; to the Justices sitting at Hicks's Hall, and those in Westminster; and they received from all these honourable benches much encouragement to proceed.

3. It was next judged proper to signify their design to many persons of eminent rank, and to the body of the clergy, as well as the ministers of other denominations, belonging to the several churches and meetings in and about the cities of London and Westminster; and they had the satisfaction to meet with an hearty consent and universal approbation from them.

4. They then printed and dispersed, at their own expense, several thousand books of instruction to constables and other parish officers, explaining and enforcing their several duties: and to prevent, as far as possible, the necessity of proceeding to an actual execution of the laws, they likewise printed and dispersed, in all parts of the town, dissuasives from Sabbath-breaking, extracts from Acts of Parliament against it, and notices to the offenders.

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of Upper Moorfields was the Foundery, which became in 1739 Wesley's headquarters in London; and close by it, the Tabernacle built by his supporters for Whitefield in 1741.

Sir John Fielding succeeded his famous brother, the novelist Henry Fielding, as magistrate at Bow Street, the principal metropolitan police court, in 1754. He was an energetic worker in the cause of the reform of the criminal classes, and had a large share in the carrying of the Police Act of 1753.

2. 'Hicks's Hall': a mansion in Clerkenwell, in St. John's Street, about 200 yards north of Smithfield. It was built by Sir Baptist Hicks in 1612 as the Sessions House for the Middlesex magistrates. Charles Wesley (*Journal*, May 31, 1740) says, 'I heard that the Foundery was lately presented, at Hicks's Hall, for a seditious assembly.' It was pulled down in 1782, and its place taken by a new Sessions House on the west side of Clerkenwell Green.

5. The way being paved by these precautions, it was in the beginning of the year 1758, that, after notices delivered again and again, which were as often set at nought, actual informations were made to the Magistrates against persons profaning the Lord's day. By this means they first cleared the streets and fields of those notorious offenders who, without any regard either to God or the King, were selling their wares from morning to night. They proceeded to a more difficult attempt, the preventing tippling on the Lord's day, spending the time in alehouses, which ought to be spent in the more immediate worship of God. Herein they were exposed to abundance of reproach, to insult and abuse of every kind, having not only the tipplers, and those who entertained them, the alehouse keepers, to contend with, but rich and honourable men, partly the landlords of those alehouse keepers, partly those who furnished them with drink, and, in general, all who gained by their sins. Some of these were not only men of substance, but men of authority; nay, in more instances than one, they were the very persons before whom the delinquents were brought. And the treatment they gave those who laid the informations naturally encouraged 'the beasts of the people' to follow their example, and to use them as fellows not fit to live upon the earth. Hence they made no scruple, not only to treat them with the basest language, not only to throw at them mud or stones, or whatever came to hand, but many times to beat them without mercy, and to drag them over the stones or through the kennels. And that they did not murder them, was not for want of will; but the bridle was in their teeth.

6. Having, therefore, received help from God, they went on to restrain bakers likewise, from spending so great a part

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5. The law governing Sabbath observance at this time was 29 Car. II. c. 7, according to which no one is allowed to exercise the work of his ordinary calling on Sunday, except in the case of necessity or

charity; and no goods are to be exposed for sale; so that the cases here mentioned were well within the scope of the law.

6. By an Act passed in 1794 bakers were allowed to bake and sell bread

of the Lord's day in exercising the works of their calling. But many of these were more noble than the victuallers. They were so far from resenting this, or looking upon it as an affront, that several, who had been hurried down the stream of custom to act contrary to their own conscience, sincerely thanked them for their labour, and acknowledged it as a real kindness.

7. In clearing the streets, fields, and alehouses of Sabbath-breakers, they fell upon another sort of offenders, as mischievous to society as any; namely, gamesters of various kinds. Some of these were of the lowest and vilest class, commonly called 'gamblers', who make a trade of seizing on young and inexperienced men, and tricking them out of all their money; and after they have beggared them, they frequently teach them the same mystery of iniquity. Several nests of these they have rooted out, and constrained not a few of them honestly to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow, and the labour of their hands.

8. Increasing in number and strength, they extended their views, and began, not only to repress profane swearing, but to remove out of our streets another public nuisance, and scandal of the Christian name,—common prostitutes. Many of these were stopped in their mid career of audacious wickedness. And, in order to go to the root of the disease, many of the houses that entertained them have been detected, prosecuted according to law, and totally suppressed. And some of the poor desolate women themselves, though fallen to

The lowest line of human infamy,

have acknowledged the gracious providence of God, and broke off their sins by lasting repentance. Several of these

during certain defined hours on Sunday; but at this time they were not excepted from the general law.

7. A *gamester* is properly one who plays at any game, especially one who plays for money; the word *gambler* came into use about the middle of the eighteenth century to

mean a *fraudulent* gamester. Johnson, *Dict.* (1755), defines *gambler*: 'A cant word, I suppose, for game or gamester; a knave whose practice it is to invite the unwary to game, and cheat them.'

8. 'The lowest line,' &c. Prior's 'Henry and Emma' has, 'O line ex-

have been placed out, and several received into the Magdalen Hospital.

9. If a little digression may be allowed, who can sufficiently admire the wisdom of Divine Providence, in the disposal of the times and seasons so as to suit one occurrence to another? For instance: just at a time when many of these poor creatures, being stopped in the course of sin, found a desire of leading a better life, as it were in answer to that sad question, 'But if I quit the way I now am in, what can I do to live? For I am not mistress of any trade; and I have no friends that will receive me':—I say, just at this time, God has prepared the Magdalen Hospital. Here those who have no trade, nor any friends to receive them, are received with all tenderness; yea, they may live, and that with comfort, being provided with all things that are needful 'for life and godliness.'

10. But to return. The number of persons brought to justice,

From August, 1757, to August, 1762, is . . . 9,596

From thence to the present time:—

For unlawful gaming, and profane swearing . . . 40

For Sabbath-breaking . . . 400

Lewd women, and keepers of ill houses . . . 550

For offering to sale obscene prints . . . 2

In all . . . 10,588

11. In the admission of members into the Society, no regard is had to any particular sect or party. Whoever is found, upon inquiry, to be a good man, is readily admitted.

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treme of human infamy.' Cf. Samuel Wesley junior's 'The Prisons Open'd,' 'O lowest depth of human misery!' *Moral and Sacred Poems*, vol. iii. p. 104.

The Magdalen Hospital was founded in 1758 by Robert Dingley and Jonas Hanway (the first Londoner to use an umbrella). It was a converted infirmary in Prescot

Street, Goodman's Fields. Poor Dr. Dodd was its chaplain, and his silver-tongued eloquence was often effective in raising money for its support. In 1769 a new building was erected for it in St. George's Fields; and just a hundred years later it was removed to Streatham.

11. The followers of Whitefield separated from those of Wesley on

And none who has selfish or pecuniary views will long continue therein, not only because he can gain nothing thereby, but because he would quickly be a loser, inasmuch as he must commence subscriber as soon as he is a member. Indeed, the vulgar cry is, 'These are all Whitefieldites.' But it is a great mistake. About twenty of the constantly subscribing members are all that are in connexion with Mr. Whitefield; about fifty are in connexion with Mr. Wesley, about twenty, who are of the Established Church, have no connexion with either; and about seventy are Dissenters; who make, in all, an hundred and sixty. There are, indeed, many more who assist in the work by occasional subscriptions.

II. 1. These are the steps which have been hitherto taken in prosecution of this design. I am, in the second place, to show the excellency thereof, notwithstanding the objections which have been raised against it. Now, this may appear from several considerations. And, first, from hence,—that the making an open stand against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness which overspread our land as a flood, is one of the noblest ways of confessing Christ in the face of His enemies. It is giving glory to God, and showing mankind that, even in these dregs of time,

There are who faith prefer,  
Though few, and piety to God.

And what more excellent than to render to God the honour due unto His name? to declare, by a stronger proof than words, even by suffering, and running all hazards, 'Verily there is a reward for the righteous; doubtless there is a God that judgeth the earth'?

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the question of Calvinism, and originated the body known as the Calvinistic Methodists. There was no definite rupture, but the building of Whitefield's Tabernacle in Moorfields in 1741 was the outward and

visible sign of the division of opinion between the two great evangelists.

II. 1. The lines are quoted from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, vi. 143. The original runs:

All are not of thy train; there be who faith  
Prefer, and piety to God.

2. How excellent is the design to prevent, in any degree, the dishonour done to His glorious name, the contempt which is poured on His authority, and the scandal brought upon our holy religion by the gross, flagrant wickedness of those who are still called by the name of Christ ! To stem, in any degree, the torrent of vice, to repress the floods of ungodliness, to remove, in any measure, those occasions of blaspheming the worthy name whereby we are called, is one of the noblest designs that can possibly enter into the heart of man to conceive.

3. And as this design thus evidently tends to bring 'glory to God in the highest,' so it no less manifestly conduces to the establishing 'peace upon earth.' For as all sin directly tends both to destroy our peace with God, by setting Him at open defiance, to banish peace from our own breasts, and to set every man's sword against his neighbour, so whatever prevents or removes sin does, in the same degree, promote peace—both peace in our own soul, peace with God, and peace with one another. Such are the genuine fruits of this design, even in the present world. But why should we confine our views to the narrow bounds of time and space ? Rather pass over these into eternity. And what fruit of it shall we find there ? Let the Apostle speak : 'Brethren, if one of you do err from the truth, and one convert him,' not to this or that opinion, but to God ; 'let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins' (Jas. v. 19, 20).

4. Nor is it to individuals only, whether those who betray others into sin, or those that are liable to be betrayed and destroyed by them, that the benefit of this design redounds ; but to the whole community whereof we are members. For is it not a sure observation, 'Righteousness exalteth a nation' ? And is it not as sure, on the other hand, that 'sin is a reproach to any people', yea, and bringeth down the curse of God upon them ? So far, therefore, as righteousness in any branch, is promoted, so far is the national interest advanced. So far as sin, especially open sin, is restrained, the curse and reproach are removed from us. Whoever,

therefore, they are that labour herein, they are general benefactors ; they are the truest friends of their King and country. And in the same proportion as their design takes place, there can be no doubt but God will give national prosperity, in accomplishment of His faithful word, ' Them that honour Me I will honour.'

5. But it is objected, ' However excellent a design this is, it does not concern *you*. For are there not persons to whom the repressing these offences, and punishing the offenders, properly belong ? Are there not constables, and other parish officers, who are bound by oath to this very thing ?' There are. Constables and churchwardens, in particular, are engaged by solemn oaths to give due information against profaners of the Lord's day, and all other scandalous sinners. But if they leave it undone, if, notwithstanding their oaths, they trouble not themselves about the matter ; it concerns all that fear God, that love mankind, and that wish well to their King and country, to pursue this design with the very same vigour as if there were no officers existing ; it being just the same thing, if they are of no use, as if they had no being.

6. ' But this is only a pretence : their real design is to get money by giving informations.' So it has frequently and roundly been affirmed ; but without the least shadow of truth. The contrary may be proved by a thousand instances : no member of the Society takes any part of the money which is by the law allotted to the informer. They never did from the beginning, nor does any of them ever receive anything to suppress or withdraw their information. This is another mistake, if not wilful slander, for which there is not the least foundation.

7. ' But the design is impracticable. Vice is risen to such a head, that it is impossible to suppress it ; especially by such means. For what can a handful of poor people

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6. The person who laid an information against certain classes of criminals was allowed a part of the

fine that might be inflicted, if he chose to take it.

do, in opposition to all the world ? ' With men this is impossible, but not with God.' And they trust not in themselves, but Him. Be then the patrons of vice ever so strong, to Him they are no more than grasshoppers. And all means are alike to Him : it is the same thing with God ' to deliver by many or by few.' The small number, therefore, of those who are on the Lord's side, is nothing ; neither the great number of those that are against Him. Still He doeth whatever pleaseth Him ; and ' there is no counsel nor strength against the Lord.'

8. ' But if the end you aim at be really to reform sinners, you choose the wrong means. It is the Word of God must effect this, and not human laws, and it is the work of ministers, not of magistrates ; therefore, the applying to these can only produce an outward reformation, it makes no change in the heart.'

It is true the Word of God is the chief, ordinary means, whereby He changes both the hearts and lives of sinners ; and He does this chiefly by the ministers of the gospel. But it is likewise true, that the magistrate is ' the minister of God ', and that he is designed of God to be ' a terror to evil-doers,' by executing human laws upon them. If this does not change the heart ; yet, to prevent outward sin is one valuable point gained. There is so much the less dishonour done to God ; less scandal brought on our holy religion ; less curse and reproach upon our nation ; less temptation laid in the way of others ; yea, and less wrath heaped up by the sinners themselves against the day of wrath.

9. ' Nay, rather more ; for it makes many of them hypocrites, pretending to be what they are not. Others, by

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8. It is true that men cannot be made moral by Act of Parliament ; but the laws can do much to make immorality difficult, and to remove temptations out of the way of the people. It is the duty of the officers of the law to arrest and convict those who break it ; but when they fail in their duty, as they often have

done in the cases of gambling, and drunkenness, and prostitution, either through sympathy with the offenders, or through such bribery and corruption as has become notorious in some American cities, it is the duty of the Christian Church to take the matter up, and secure a better administration of the law.

exposing them to shame, and putting them to expense, are made impudent and desperate in wickedness: so that, in reality, none of them are any better, if they are not worse, than they were before.'

This is a mistake all over. For, (1) where are these hypocrites? We know none who have pretended to be what they were not. (2) The exposing obstinate offenders to shame, and putting them to expense, does not make them desperate in offending, but afraid to offend. (3) Some of them, far from being worse, are substantially better; the whole tenor of their lives being changed. Yea, (4) some are inwardly changed, even from 'darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'

10. 'But many are not convinced that buying or selling on the Lord's day is a sin.'

If they are not convinced, they ought to be, it is high time they should. The case is as plain as plain can be. For if an open, wilful breach both of the law of God and the law of the land is not sin, pray what is? And if such a breach of divine and human laws is not to be punished, because a man is not convinced it is a sin, there is an end of all execution of justice, and all men may live as they list!

11. 'But *mild* methods ought to be tried first.' They ought: and so they are. A mild admonition is given to every offender, before the law is put in execution against him; nor is any man prosecuted, till he has express notice that this will be the case unless he will prevent that prosecution by removing the cause of it. In every case, the mildest method is used which the nature of the case will bear; nor are severer means ever applied, but when they are absolutely necessary to the end.

12. 'Well, but after all this stir about reformation, what real good has been done?' Unspeakable good; and abundantly more than any one could have expected in so short a time, considering the small number of the instruments, and the difficulties they had to encounter. Much evil has been already prevented, and much has been removed. Many sinners have been outwardly reformed; some have been

inwardly changed. The honour of Him whose name we bear, so openly affronted, has been openly defended. And it is not easy to determine, how many and how great blessings, even this little stand, made for God and His cause, against His daring enemies, may already have derived upon our whole nation. On the whole, then, after all the objections that can be made, reasonable men may still conclude, a more excellent design could scarce ever enter into the heart of man.

III. 1. But what manner of men ought they to be who engage in such a design? Some may imagine, any that are willing to assist therein ought readily to be admitted; and that the greater the number of members, the greater will be their influence. But this is by no means true: matter of fact undeniably proves the contrary. While the former Society for Reformation of Manners consisted of chosen members only, though neither many, rich, nor powerful, they broke through all opposition, and were eminently successful in every branch of their undertaking; but when a number of men less carefully chosen were received into that Society, they grew less and less useful, till, by insensible degrees, they dwindled into nothing.

2. The number, therefore, of the members is no more to be attended to than the riches or eminence. This is a work of God. It is undertaken in the name of God, and for His sake. It follows, that men who neither love nor fear God have no part or lot in this matter. 'Why takest thou My covenant in thy mouth?' may God say to any of these, 'whereas thou thyself hatest to be reformed, and hast cast My words behind thee.' Whoever, therefore, lives in any known sin is not fit to engage in reforming sinners: more especially if he is guilty, in any instance, or in the least degree, of profaning the name of God; of buying, selling, or doing any unnecessary work on the Lord's day; or offending in any other of those instances which this Society is peculiarly designed to reform. No; let none who stands himself in need of this reformation presume to meddle with such an undertaking. First let him 'pull the

beam out of his own eye ' : let him be himself *unblamable* in all things.

3. Not that this will suffice : every one engaging herein should be more than a harmless man. He should be a man of faith ; having, at least, such a degree of that ' evidence of things not seen,' as to aim ' not at the things that are seen, which are temporal, but at those that are not seen, which are eternal ' ; such faith as produces a steady fear of God, with a lasting resolution, by His grace, to abstain from all that He has forbidden, and to do all that He has commanded. He will more especially need that particular branch of faith,—confidence in God. It is this faith which ' removes mountains ' , which ' quenches the violence of fire ' , which breaks through all opposition ; and enables one to stand against and ' chase a thousand,' knowing in whom his strength lies, and, even when he has the ' sentence of death in himself, trusting in Him who raiseth the dead.'

4. He that has faith and confidence in God will, of consequence, be a man of courage. And such it is highly needful every man should be, who engages in this undertaking : for many things will occur in the prosecution thereof which are terrible to nature , indeed, so terrible, that all who ' confer with flesh and blood ' will be afraid to encounter them. Here, therefore, true courage has its proper place, and is necessary in the highest degree. And this faith only can supply. A believer can say,

I fear no denial, no danger I fear,  
Nor start from the trial ; for Jesus is near.

5. To courage patience is nearly allied , the one regarding future, the other present evils. And whoever joins in carrying on a design of this nature, will have great occasion for

III. 4. The lines are from verse 2 of Charles Wesley's hymn ' The Good Fight,' in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1742. It is Hymn 273 in the Methodist Hymn-Book of 1876 ; and Hymn

436 (with the 5th verse omitted) in the present Hymn-Book. The second line is not quite accurate ; it should be ' Nor start from the trial while Jesus is near.'

this. For, notwithstanding all his unblamableness, he will find himself just in Ishmael's situation, 'his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him.' And no wonder: if it be true, that 'all who will live godly shall suffer persecution,' how eminently must this be fulfilled in them who, not content to live godly themselves, compel the ungodly to do so too, or, at least, to refrain from notorious ungodliness! Is not this declaring war against all the world? setting all the children of the devil at defiance? And will not Satan himself, 'the prince of this world, the ruler of the darkness' thereof, exert all his subtilty and all his force in support of his tottering kingdom? Who can expect the roaring lion will tamely submit to have the prey plucked out of his teeth? 'Ye have,' therefore, 'need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye may receive the promise.'

6. And ye have need of steadiness, that ye may 'hold fast' this 'profession of your faith without wavering.' This also should be found in all that unite in this Society, which is not a task for a 'double-minded man'—for one that is 'unstable in his ways.' He that is as a reed shaken with the wind is not fit for this warfare; which demands a firm purpose of soul, a constant, determined resolution. One that is wanting in this may 'set his hand to the plough', but how soon will he 'look back'! He may, indeed, 'endure for a time; but when persecution, or tribulation,' public or private troubles, arise, because of the work, 'immediately he is offended.'

7. Indeed, it is hard for any to persevere in so unpleasing a work, unless love overpowers both pain and fear. And, therefore, it is highly expedient, that all engaged therein have 'the love of God shed abroad in their hearts'; that they should all be able to declare, 'We love Him, because He first

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7. The verse is verse 3 of Charles Wesley's hymn 'On a Journey' in *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1740. It is Hymn 422 in the present Methodist Hymn-Book (with the first

verse omitted). The original is, like this quotation, in the singular number throughout; it was altered to the plural in the 1780 Hymn-Book, so as to make it more suitable for

loved us.' The presence of Him whom their soul loveth will then make their labour light. They can then say, not from the wildness of a heated imagination, but with the utmost truth and soberness,—

With Thee conversing, I forget  
All time, and toil, and care :  
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,  
While Thou, my God, art here.

8. What adds a still greater sweetness, even to labour and pain, is the Christian 'love of our neighbour.' When they 'love their neighbour,' that is, every soul of man, 'as themselves,' as their own souls, when 'the love of Christ constrains' them to love one another, 'even as He loved us'; when, as He 'tasted death for every man,' so they are 'ready to lay down their life for their brethren' (including in that number every man, every soul for which Christ died), what prospect of danger will then be able to fright them from their 'labour of love'? What suffering will they not be ready to undergo, to save one soul from everlasting burnings? What continuance of labour, disappointment, pain, will vanquish their fixed resolution? Will they not be—

'Gainst all repulses steel'd, nor ever tired  
With toilsome day or ill-succeeding night?

So love both 'hopeth' and 'endureth all things'; so 'charity never faileth.'

9. Love is necessary for all the members of such a Society, on another account likewise, even because 'it is not puffed up', it produces not only courage and patience, but humility. And O how needful is this for all who are so employed!

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congregational use. The last line should be, 'If Thou, my God, art here.'

There is an obvious reminiscence of Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 639:

With thee conversing, I forget all time,  
All seasons and their change; all please alike.

II—32

8. I have not yet found the author of these two lines; he was evidently thinking of Spenser's *Faerie Queen*, i. 2. 2, where the messengers of hell 'gan tell Their bootelesse paines, and ill-succeeding night'; but he did not understand it!

What can be of more importance, than that they should be little, and mean, and base, and vile, in their own eyes ! For, otherwise, should they think themselves anything, should they impute anything to themselves, should they admit anything of a Pharisaic spirit, ' trusting in themselves that they are righteous, and despising others ' , nothing could more directly tend to overthrow the whole design. For then they would not only have all the world, but also God Himself, to contend with , seeing He ' resisteth the proud, and giveth grace ' only ' to the humble.' Deeply conscious, therefore, should every member of this Society be of his own foolishness, weakness, helplessness , continually hanging, with his whole soul, upon Him who alone hath wisdom and strength, with an unspeakable conviction that ' the help which is done upon earth, God doeth it Himself ' ; and that it is He alone who ' worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

10. One point more whoever engages in this design should have deeply impressed on his heart ; namely, that ' the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.' Let him, therefore, learn of Him who was meek, as well as lowly ; and let him abide in meekness, as well as humility : ' with all lowliness and meekness,' let him ' walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.' Let him be ' gentle toward all men,' good or bad, for his own sake, for their sake, for Christ's sake. Are any ' ignorant, and out of the way ' ? Let him have ' compassion ' upon them. Do they even oppose the word and work of God, yea, set themselves in battle array against it ? So much the more hath he need ' in meekness to instruct those who thus oppose themselves ' ; if haply they may ' escape out of the snare of the devil,' and no more be ' taken captive at his will.'

IV 1. From the qualifications of those who are proper to engage in such an undertaking as this, I proceed to show, fourthly, with what spirit, and in what manner, it ought to

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10. It would be well if all our social reformers would remember this.

be pursued. First, with what spirit. Now this first regards the *motive*, which is to be preserved in every step that is taken ; for if, at any time, ' the light which is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness ! But if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.' This is, therefore, continually to be remembered, and carried into every word and action. Nothing is to be spoke or done, either great or small, with a view to any temporal advantage , nothing with a view to the favour or esteem, the love or the praise, of men. But the intention, the eye of the mind, is always to be fixed on the glory of God and good of man.

2. But the spirit with which everything is to be done regards the *temper* as well as the motive. And this is no other than that which has been described above. For the same courage, patience, steadiness, which qualify a man for the work, are to be exercised therein. Above all, let him ' take the shield of faith ' this will quench a thousand fiery darts. Let him exert all the faith which God has given him, in every trying hour. And let all his doings be done in love : never let this be wrested from him. Neither must many waters quench this love, nor the floods of ingratitude drown it. Let, likewise, that lowly mind be in him which was also in Christ Jesus , yea, and let him ' be clothed with humility,' filling his heart, and adorning his whole behaviour. At the same time, let him ' put on bowels of mercies, gentleness, long-suffering ' ; avoiding the least appearance of malice, bitterness, anger, or resentment , knowing it is our calling, not to be ' overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good.' In order to preserve this humble, gentle love, it is needful to do all things with recollection of spirit ; watching against all hurry, or dissipation of thought, as well as against pride, wrath, or surliness. But this can be no otherwise preserved than by ' continuing instant in prayer,' both before and after he comes into the field, and during the whole action ; and by doing all in the spirit of sacrifice, offering all to God through the Son of His love.

3. As to the outward manner of acting, a general rule is, Let it be expressive of these inward tempers. But, to be

more particular let every man beware not to 'do evil that good may come.' Therefore, 'putting away all lying, let every man speak the truth to his neighbour.' Use no fraud or guile, either in order to detect or to punish any man ; but 'by simplicity and godly sincerity commend yourself to men's consciences in the sight of God.' It is probable that, by your adhering to these rules, fewer offenders will be convicted , but so much the more will the blessing of God accompany the whole undertaking.

4. But let innocence be joined with prudence, properly so called : not that offspring of hell which the world calls prudence, which is mere craft, cunning, dissimulation ; but with that 'wisdom from above' which our Lord peculiarly recommends to all who would promote His Kingdom upon earth 'Be ye therefore wise as serpents,' while ye are 'harmless as doves.' This wisdom will instruct you how to suit your words, and whole behaviour, to the persons with whom you have to do , to the time, place, and all other circumstances. It will teach you to cut off occasion of offence, even from those who seek occasion, and to do things of the most offensive nature in the least offensive manner that is possible.

5. Your manner of speaking, particularly to offenders, should be at all times deeply serious (lest it appear like insulting or triumphing over them), rather inclining to sad ; showing that you pity them for what they do, and sympathize with them in what they suffer. Let your air and tone of voice, as well as words, be dispassionate, calm, mild ; yea, where it would not appear like dissimulation; even kind and friendly. In some cases, where it will probably be received as it is meant, you may profess the good-will you bear them ; but, at the same time (that it may not be thought to proceed from fear, or any wrong inclination), professing your intrepidity, and inflexible resolution to oppose and punish vice to the uttermost.

V 1. It remains only to make some application of what has been said , partly to you who are already engaged in this

work ; partly to all that fear God ; and more especially to them that love as well as fear Him.

With regard to you who are already engaged in this work, the first advice I would give you is, calmly and deeply to consider the nature of your undertaking. Know what you are about ; be thoroughly acquainted with what you have in hand , consider the objections which are made to the whole of your undertaking ; and, before you proceed, be satisfied that those objections have no real weight then may every man act as he is fully persuaded in his own mind.

2. I advise you, secondly, be not in haste to increase your number , and, in adding thereto, regard not wealth, rank, or any outward circumstance , only regard the qualifications above described. Inquire diligently, whether the person proposed be of an unblamable carriage, and whether he be a man of faith, courage, patience, steadiness ; whether he be a lover of God and man. If so, he will add to your strength as well as number : if not, you will lose by him more than you gain ; for you will displease God. And be not afraid to purge out from among you any who do not answer the preceding character. By thus lessening your number, you will increase your strength : you will be ' vessels meet for your Master's use.'

3. I would, thirdly, advise you narrowly to observe from what motive you at any time act or speak. Beware that your intention be not stained with any regard either to profit or praise. Whatever you do, ' do it to the Lord,' as the servants of Christ. Do not aim at pleasing yourself in any point, but pleasing Him whose you are and whom you serve. Let your eye be single, from first to last ; eye God alone in every word and work.

4. I advise you, in the fourth place, see that you do everything in a right temper , with lowliness and meekness, with patience and gentleness, worthy the gospel of Christ. Take every step, trusting in God, and in the most tender, loving spirit you are able. Meantime, watch always against all hurry and dissipation of spirit , and pray always, with all earnestness and perseverance, that your faith fail not. And

let nothing interrupt that spirit of sacrifice which you make of all you have and are, of all you suffer and do, that it may be an offering of a sweet-smelling savour to God, through Jesus Christ !

5. As to the manner of acting and speaking, I advise you to do it with all innocence and simplicity, prudence and seriousness. Add to these, all possible calmness and mildness ; nay, all the tenderness which the case will bear. You are not to behave as butchers, or hangmen , but as surgeons rather, who put the patient to no more pain than is necessary in order to the cure. For this purpose, each of you, likewise, has need of ' a lady's hand with a lion's heart.' So shall many, even of them you are constrained to punish, ' glorify God in the day of visitation.'

6. I exhort all of you who fear God, as ever you hope to find mercy at His hands, as you dread being found (though you knew it not) ' even to fight against God,' do not, on any account, reason, or pretence whatsoever, either directly or indirectly, oppose or hinder so merciful a design, and one so conducive to His glory. But this is not all : if you are lovers of mankind, if you long to lessen the sins and miseries of your fellow creatures, can you satisfy yourselves, can you be clear before God, by barely not opposing it ? Are not you also bound, by the most sacred ties, ' as you have opportunity, to do good to all men ' ? And is not here an opportunity of doing good to many, even good of the highest kind ? In the name of God, then, embrace the opportunity ! Assist in doing this good, if no otherwise, yet by your earnest prayers for them who are immediately employed therein. Assist them, according to your ability, to defray the expense which necessarily attends it, and which, without the assistance of charitable persons, would be a burden they could not bear. Assist them, if you can without inconvenience, by quarterly or yearly subscriptions. At least, assist them *now*, use the present hour, doing what God puts into your heart. Let it

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V. 5. ' A lady's hand with a lion's heart ' : a proverbial expression. I do not know where exactly Wesley found it.

not be said, that you saw your brethren labouring for God, and would not help them with one of your fingers. In this way, however, 'come to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty!'

7. I have an higher demand upon you who love as well as fear God. He whom you fear, whom you love, has qualified you for promoting His work in a more excellent way. Because you love God, you love your brother also: you love, not only your friends, but your enemies; not only the friends, but even the enemies, of God. You have 'put on, as the elect of God, lowliness, gentleness, long-suffering.' You have faith in God, and in Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; faith which overcometh the world: and hereby you conquer both evil and shame, and that 'fear of man which bringeth a snare'; so that you can stand with boldness before them that despise you, and make no account of your labours. Qualified, then, as you are, and armed for the fight, will you be like the children of Ephraim, 'who, being harnessed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle'? Will *you* leave a few of your brethren to stand alone, against all the hosts of the aliens? O say not, 'This is too heavy a cross; I have not strength or courage to bear it!' True, not of yourself but you that believe 'can do all things through Christ strengthening you.' 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' No cross is too heavy for *him* to bear; knowing that they that 'suffer with Him shall reign with Him.' Say not, 'Nay, but I cannot bear to be *singular*.' Then you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. No one enters there but through the narrow way; and all that walk in this are singular. Say not, 'But I cannot endure the reproach, the odious name of an informer.' And did any man ever save his soul, that was not a by-word, and a proverb of reproach? Neither canst thou ever save thine, unless thou art willing that men should say all manner of evil of thee. Say not, 'But if I am active in this work, I shall lose, not only my reputation, but my friends, my customers, my business, my livelihood; so that I shall be brought to poverty.' Thou

shalt not ; thou canst not , it is absolutely impossible, unless God Himself chooseth it , for His ' kingdom ruleth over all,' and ' the very hairs of thy head are all numbered.' But if the wise, the gracious God choose it for thee, wilt thou murmur or complain ? Wilt thou not rather say, ' The cup which my Father has given me, shall I not drink it ' ? If you ' suffer for Christ, happy are you ; the Spirit of glory and of God ' shall ' rest upon you.' Say not, ' I would suffer all things, but my wife will not consent to it ; and, certainly, a man ought to leave father and mother and all, and cleave to his wife.' True ; all but God ; all but Christ : but he ought not to leave Him for his wife. He is not to leave any duty undone, for the dearest relative. Our Lord Himself hath said in this very sense, ' If any man love father, or mother, or wife, or children, more than Me, he is not worthy of Me.' Say not, ' Well, I would forsake all for Christ ; but one duty must not hinder another ; and this would frequently hinder my attending public worship.' Sometimes it probably would. ' Go, then, and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.' And whatever is lost by showing this mercy, God will repay seven-fold into thy bosom. Say not, ' But I shall hurt my own soul. I am a young man , and by taking up loose women I should expose myself to temptation.' Yes, if you did this in your own strength, or for your own pleasure. But that is not the case. You trust in God ; and you aim at pleasing Him only. And if He should call you even into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, ' though thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flames kindle upon thee.' ' True ; if He called me into the furnace ; but I do not see that I am called to this.' Perhaps thou art not willing to see it. However, if thou wast not called before, I call thee now, in the name of Christ : take up thy cross, and follow Him ! Reason no more with flesh and blood, but now resolve to cast in thy lot with the most despised, the most infamous, of His followers , the filth and offscouring of the world ! I call thee in particular, who didst once strengthen their hands, but since art drawn back.

Take courage! Be strong! Fulfil their joy, by returning with heart and hand! Let it appear thou 'departedst for a season, that they might receive thee again for ever.' O be 'not disobedient to the heavenly calling'! And, as for all of you who know whereunto ye are called, count ye all things loss, so ye may save one soul for which Christ died! And therein 'take no thought for the morrow,' but 'cast all your care on Him that careth for you!' Commit your souls, bodies, substance, all to Him, 'as unto a merciful and faithful Creator'!

Wesley added the following note to this sermon in the 1771 edition of the *Works*: 'After this Society had subsisted several years, and done unspeakable good, it was wholly destroyed by a verdict given against it in the King's Bench, with three hundred pounds damages. I doubt a severe account remains for the witnesses, the jury, and all who were concerned in that dreadful affair!' The action referred to was brought against the Society in 1765. In

*Journal*, February 2, 1766, Wesley says, 'I dined with W. Welsh, the father of the late Society for Reformation of Manners. But that excellent design is at a full stop. They have indeed convicted the wretch who, by wilful perjury, carried the cause against them in Westminster Hall; but they could never recover the cost of that suit. Lord, how long shall the ungodly triumph?'

SERMON LIII  
ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. MR. GEORGE  
WHITEFIELD

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL IN TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, AND  
AT THE TABERNACLE, NEAR MOORFIELDS, ON SUNDAY,  
NOVEMBER 18, 1770.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD died at Newburyport, Massachusetts, thirty miles north of Boston, on September 30, 1770, in the Presbyterian manse, which is still preserved. He was buried in a vault under the pulpit of the Presbyterian meeting-house on October 2, according to his own wish; and in 1828 a cenotaph was erected in the church with a suitable inscription. Under date November 10, 1770, Wesley says, 'I returned to London, and had the melancholy news of Mr. Whitefield's death confirmed by his executors, who desired me to preach his funeral sermon on Sunday the 18th.' [This was his own wish. 'If you should die abroad,' said Mr. Keen, 'whom shall we get to preach your funeral sermon? Must it be your old friend, the Rev. Mr. John Wesley?' This question was often put, and as often Whitefield answered, 'He is the man.'] 'In order to write this, I retired to Lewisham on Monday; and on Sunday following went to the chapel in Tottenham Court Road. An immense multitude was gathered together from all corners of the town. I was at first afraid that a great part of the congregation would not be able to hear; but it pleased God to strengthen my voice that even those at the door heard distinctly. It was an awful season. All were still as night; most appeared to be deeply affected; and an impression was made on many which one would hope will not speedily be effaced. The time appointed for my beginning at the Tabernacle was half-hour after five, but it was quite filled at three; so I began at four. At first the noise was exceeding great; but it ceased when I began to speak; and my voice was again so strengthened that all who were within could hear, unless an accidental noise hindered here or there for a few moments. Oh that all may hear the voice of Him with whom are the issues of life and death; and who so loudly, by this unexpected

stroke, calls all His children to love one another.' On the following Friday he repeated the sermon at the Tabernacle at Greenwich to an overflowing congregation. Again, on January 2, 1771, he preached at Deptford 'a kind of funeral sermon for Mr. Whitefield. In every place I wish to show all possible respect to the memory of that great and good man.'

It must not be forgotten that at this very time Wesley was in the thick of the controversy with the Rev. Walter Shirley and the Countess of Huntingdon's preachers about the famous *Minutes* of 1770, in which Wesley had laid down clearly the differences between his views and those of the Calvinists. It is much to the credit both of Mr. Whitefield's friends and of Wesley that this was not allowed to interfere with their invitation to him to preach the sermon, nor with his own affectionate and ungrudging recognition of the greatness and goodness of his departed fellow worker. Indeed, their difference of opinion had never, since the dispute in 1741, been permitted to interrupt their mutual love and esteem; they agreed to differ, and still to love one another.

The sermon was at once published in London; and a reprint was issued in Dublin, also dated 1770, with an additional hymn 'Glory and thanks and love'; and it was placed last in the sermons in vol. iv (1771). A warm attack was made on it in the *Gospel Magazine* of February 1771, probably by Mr. Romaine. He first objected to the text. 'How improper,' he says, 'to apply the words of a mad prophet to so holy a man as Mr. Whitefield!' Of course Wesley's answer was obvious: he did not apply the words to Mr. Whitefield, but to himself; and he humorously says, 'Nothing would be more suitable than for Balaam junior to use the words of his forefather; surely a poor reprobate may, without offence, wish to die like one of the elect!' The more serious part of the attack was on the statement in iii. 5 that 'the fundamental doctrines which Mr. Whitefield everywhere insisted on' were 'the new birth, and justification by faith.' Romaine, on the contrary, affirms 'the grand fundamental doctrines, which he everywhere preached, were the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son, and absolute predestination flowing therefrom.' Wesley answers '(1) that Mr. Whitefield did not everywhere preach these. In all the times I myself heard him preach, I never heard him utter a sentence either on one or the other. Yea, all the times he preached in West Street Chapel, and in our other chapels throughout England, he did not preach these doctrines at all, no, not in a single paragraph. (2) That he did everywhere preach the new birth, and justification by faith. Both in West Street Chapel and in all our other chapels throughout England, he did preach the necessity of the new birth, and justification by faith, as clearly as he has done in his two volumes of printed sermons.' Wesley was not ignorant of the differ-

ences between himself and Whitefield in regard to predestination ; but most properly in this sermon, whilst he recognizes (iii. 1) that there are differences of opinion between the children of God, he emphasizes the points of agreement ; and whatever Whitefield may have believed about the eternal decrees, no man ever preached a full and free salvation more constantly and effectively than he did. The only solution of this difficulty is to be found in the recognition that the two opposing views represent the two sides of one truth, which our finite understanding is not able to synthesize ; but which we may nevertheless accept, just as we accept the Unity in Trinity in the Godhead, or the divine-human person of our Lord.

Incidentally we learn from Wesley's reply to Romaine that one of the hymns sung at the service was Charles Wesley's ' Shrinking from the cold hand of death,' from the *Short Hymns on Select Passages* (1762), now No. 823 in the Methodist Hymn-Book ; the other was no doubt the one appended to the sermon, ' Servant of God, well done ! ' written by Charles Wesley for this occasion, and published as ' An Hymn on the Death of the Rev. Mr. Whitefield ' in the third (posthumous) series of Funeral Hymns. The hymn appended to the Dublin edition of the sermon is No. 42 in the second series of Funeral Hymns, published in 1759 (Osborn's edition of *Poetical Works*, vi. 285).

The Tottenham Court Road Chapel, or Whitefield's Tabernacle, as it was often called, stood on the west side of the road, between Tottenham Street and Howland Street. The site was then surrounded by fields and gardens, and there were only two houses to the north of it. The foundation stone was laid by Whitefield in June 1756, and he opened it on November 7 of the same year. It soon was found to be too small, and was enlarged in 1759. A vault was prepared beneath the chapel, in which Whitefield meant that both he himself and the two Wesleys should be interred ; but his wish was not fulfilled. In 1890 the building was taken down and re-erected. It is now known as Whitefield's Central Mission.

The Tabernacle was originally a wooden shed to the north of Upper Moorfields, close to Wesley's Foundery, opened in 1741 ; in 1753 it was superseded by a brick building, the one in which this sermon was preached in the afternoon. This was used for over a century, and was then replaced by a Tabernacle at the corner of Tabernacle Street and Leonard Street, Finsbury, which occupied the old site. The old pulpit was retained from which Wesley preached on this occasion. The building is now used for business purposes.

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*Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his !—*

NUM. xxiii. 10.

1. 'LET my last end be like his !' How many of you join in this wish ? Perhaps there are few of you who do not, even in this numerous congregation ! And O that this wish may rest upon your minds !—that it may not die away till your souls also are lodged 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest' !

2. An elaborate exposition of the text will not be expected on this occasion. It would detain you too long from the sadly-pleasing thought of your beloved brother, friend, and pastor, yea, and father too for how many are here whom he hath 'begotten in the Lord' ! Will it not, then, be more suitable to your inclinations, as well as to this solemnity, directly to speak of this man of God, whom you have so often heard speaking in this place ?—the end of whose conversation ye know, 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.'

And may we not,—

I. OBSERVE A FEW PARTICULARS OF HIS LIFE AND DEATH ?

II. TAKE SOME VIEW OF HIS CHARACTER ? AND,

III. INQUIRE HOW WE MAY IMPROVE THIS AWFUL PROVIDENCE, HIS SUDDEN REMOVAL FROM US ?

I. 1. We may, in the first place, observe a few particulars of his life and death. He was born at Gloucester, in December, 1714, and put to a grammar-school there, when about twelve years old. When he was seventeen, he began to be seriously religious, and served God to the best of his knowledge. About

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The text is, as so often with Wesley, a motto only ; no attempt is made to expound it, or to make any use of its picturesque setting in the story of Balaam.

I. par. 1. He was born at the Bell Inn, on December 18 (old style). The Grammar School was that of St. Mary de Crypt, founded in the

sixteenth century by John Coke and his lady. At the age of fifteen he left school, and for two years acted as tapster in his mother's tavern ; she then suggested his going to Oxford, and after another year at the grammar school, he went to Pembroke as a servitor.

eighteen he removed to the University, and was admitted at Pembroke College in Oxford; and about a year after he became acquainted with the Methodists (so called), whom from that time he loved as his own soul.

2. By them he was convinced that we 'must be born again,' or outward religion will profit us nothing. He joined with them in fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays; in visiting the sick and the prisoners; and in gathering up the very fragments of time, that no moment might be lost: and he changed the course of his studies; reading chiefly such books as entered into the heart of religion, and led directly to an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

3. He was soon tried as with fire. Not only his reputation was lost, and some of his dearest friends forsook him; but he was exercised with inward trials, and those of the severest kind. Many nights he lay sleepless upon his bed; many days, prostrate on the ground. But after he had groaned several months under 'the spirit of bondage,' God was pleased to remove the heavy load, by giving him 'the Spirit of adoption', enabling him through a living faith, to lay hold on 'the Son of His Love.'

4. However, it was thought needful, for the recovery of his health, which was much impaired, that he should go into the country. He accordingly went to Gloucester, where God enabled him to awaken several young persons. These soon formed themselves into a little society, and were some of the first-fruits of his labour. Shortly after, he began to read, twice or thrice a week, to some poor people in the town, and every day to read to and pray with the prisoners in the county jail.

5. Being now about twenty-one years of age, he was solicited to enter into holy orders. Of this he was greatly afraid, being deeply sensible of his own insufficiency. But the Bishop himself sending for him, and telling him, 'Though

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3. He dates his conversion about seven weeks after Easter 1735; three years before the time when John

and Charles Wesley received the consciousness of forgiven sin.

5. The bishop was Dr. Benson;

I had purposed to ordain none under three-and-twenty, yet I will ordain you whenever you come'—and several other providential circumstances concurring—he submitted, and was ordained on Trinity Sunday, 1736. The next Sunday he preached to a crowded auditory, in the church wherein he was baptized. The week following he returned to Oxford, and took his Bachelor's degree: and he was now fully employed; the care of the prisoners and the poor lying chiefly on him.

6. But it was not long before he was invited to London, to serve the cure of a friend going into the country. He continued there two months, lodging in the Tower, reading prayers in the chapel twice a week, catechizing and preaching once, beside visiting the soldiers in the barracks and the infirmary. He also read prayers every evening at Wapping chapel, and preached at Ludgate prison every Tuesday. While he was here, letters came from his friends in Georgia, which made him long to go and help them but not seeing his call clear, at the appointed time he returned to his little charge at Oxford, where several youths met daily at his room, to build up each other in their most holy faith.

7. But he was quickly called from hence again, to supply the cure of Dummer, in Hampshire. Here he read prayers twice a day; early in the morning, and in the evening after the people came from work. He also daily catechized the children, and visited from house to house. He now divided the day into three parts, allotting eight hours for sleep and meals, eight for study and retirement, and eight for reading

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he was ordained in the cathedral at Gloucester. His first sermon was preached in the church of St. Mary de Crypt, where he had been baptized and received his first communion. His subject was *The Necessity and Benefit of Religious Society*.

6. This 'friend' was the Rev. Thomas Broughton, one of the original Oxford Methodists, after-

wards secretary of the S.P.C.K. He died in 1777.

Ludgate was still used as a prison for debtors, until it was pulled down in 1760. It stood on Ludgate Hill, just west of St. Martin's Church.

7. He went to Dummer to supply for the Rev. Charles Kinchin, another of the little group of Oxford Methodists.

prayers, catechizing, and visiting the people. Is there a more excellent way for a servant of Christ and His Church? If not, who will 'go and do likewise'?

8. Yet his mind still ran on going abroad, and being now fully convinced he was called of God thereto, he set all things in order, and, in January, 1737, went down to take leave of his friends in Gloucester. It was in this journey that God began to bless his ministry in an uncommon manner. Wherever he preached, amazing multitudes of hearers flocked together, in Gloucester, in Stonehouse, in Bath, in Bristol; so that the heat of the churches was scarce supportable: and the impressions made on the minds of many were no less extraordinary. After his return to London, while he was detained by General Oglethorpe, from week to week and from month to month, it pleased God to bless his word still more. And he was indefatigable in his labour: generally on Sunday he preached four times, to exceeding large auditories; beside reading prayers twice or thrice, and walking to and fro often ten or twelve miles.

9. On December 28 he left London. It was on the 29th that he first preached without notes. December 30, he went on board; but it was above a month before they cleared the land. One happy effect of their very slow passage he mentions in April following 'Blessed be God, we now live very comfortably in the great cabin. We talk of little else but God and Christ; and scarce a word is heard among us when together, but what has reference to our fall in the first, and our new birth in the Second, Adam.' It seems, likewise, to have been a peculiar providence, that he should spend a little time at

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8. General James Oglethorpe was the chief promoter of the scheme for the colonization of Georgia; it was through him that the Wesleys and now Whitefield were induced to go there.

9. Wesley omits to mention that whilst Whitefield's ship was at anchor off Deal, he himself landed there from Georgia; and learning of

Whitefield's intention, he cast lots as to whether his friend should go on to Georgia or return to London. The lot fell 'Let him return to London'; and he at once wrote to Whitefield, urging him not to proceed. Whitefield's answer showed more common sense than his mentor's method of settling the matter, and he refused to take his advice.

Gibraltar ; where both citizens and soldiers, high and low, young and old, acknowledged the day of their visitation.

10. From Sunday, May 7, 1738, till the latter end of August following, he 'made full proof of his ministry' in Georgia, particularly at Savannah : he read prayers and expounded twice a day, and visited the sick daily. On Sunday he expounded at five in the morning ; at ten read prayers and preached, and at three in the afternoon ; and at seven in the evening expounded the Church Catechism. How much easier is it for our brethren in the ministry, either in England, Scotland, or Ireland, to find fault with such a labourer in our Lord's vineyard, than to tread in his steps !

11. It was now that he observed the deplorable condition of many children here ; and that God put into his heart the first thought of founding an Orphan-house, for which he determined to raise contributions in England, if God should give him a safe return thither. In December following, he did return to London , and on Sunday, January 14, 1739, he was ordained priest at Christ Church, Oxford. The next day he came to London again ; and on Sunday, the 21st, preached twice. But though the churches were large, and crowded exceedingly, yet many hundreds stood in the churchyard, and hundreds more returned home. This put him upon the first thought of preaching in the open air. But when he mentioned it to some of his friends, they judged it to be mere madness : so he did not carry it into execution till after he had left London. It was on Wednesday, February 21, that, finding all the church doors to be shut in Bristol (beside, that no church was able to contain one half of the congregation), at three in the afternoon he went to Kingswood, and preached abroad to near two thousand people. On Friday he preached there to four or five thousand ; and on Sunday to, it was supposed, ten thousand ! The number continually increased all the time he stayed at Bristol , and a flame of holy love was kindled, which will not easily be put out. The

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11. He was ordained priest by already ordained him deacon at 'good Bishop Benson,' who had Bristol.

same was afterwards kindled in various parts of Wales, of Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire. Indeed, wherever he went, God abundantly confirmed the word of His messenger.

12. On Sunday, April 29, he preached the first time in Moorfields, and on Kennington Common; and the thousands of hearers were as quiet as they could have been in a church. Being again detained in England from month to month, he made little excursions into several counties, and received the contributions of willing multitudes for an Orphan-house in Georgia. The embargo which was now laid on the shipping gave him leisure for more journeys through various parts of England, for which many will have reason to bless God to all eternity. At length, on August 14, he embarked but he did not land in Pennsylvania till October 30. Afterwards he went through Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, New York, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, preaching all along to immense congregations, with full as great effect as in England. On January 10, 1740, he arrived at Savannah.

13. January 29, he added three desolate orphans to near twenty which he had in his house before. The next day he laid out the ground for the house, about ten miles from Savannah. February 11, he took in four orphans more, and set out for Frederica, in order to fetch the orphans that were in the southern parts of the colony. In his return he fixed a school, both for children and grown persons, at Darien, and took four orphans thence. March 25, he laid the first stone of the Orphan-house; to which, with great propriety, he gave the name of Bethesda; a work for which the children yet unborn shall praise the Lord. He had now about forty orphans, so that there was near a hundred mouths to be fed daily. But he was 'careful for nothing,'

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12. This embargo was the result of the trouble with Spain, which ended in the declaration of war on October 19.

13. The Orphan House was designed for the help and training of the many children who had been

left fatherless in the new colony. It was built at Bethesda, about a dozen miles from Savannah, and cost over £3,000.

Darien was a Scottish settlement in the south of Georgia.

casting his care on Him who feedeth the young ravens that call upon Him.

14. In April he made another tour through Pennsylvania, the Jerseys, and New York. Incredible multitudes flocked to hear, among whom were abundance of negroes. In all places the greater part of the hearers were affected to an amazing degree. Many were deeply convinced of their lost state, many truly converted to God. In some places, thousands cried out aloud ; many as in the agonies of death , most were drowned in tears , some turned pale as death , others were wringing their hands , others lying on the ground , others sinking into the arms of their friends , almost all lifting up their eyes, and calling for mercy.

15. He returned to Savannah, June 5. The next evening, during the public service, the whole congregation, young and old, were dissolved in tears after service, several of the parishioners, and all his family, particularly the little children, returned home crying along the street, and some could not help praying aloud. The groans and cries of the children continued all night, and great part of the next day.

16. In August he set out again, and through various provinces came to Boston. While he was here, and in the neighbouring places, he was extremely weak in body yet the multitudes of hearers were so great, and the effects wrought on them so astonishing, as the oldest men then alive in the town had never seen before. The same power attended his preaching at New York, particularly on Sunday, November 2 almost as soon as he began, crying, weeping, and wailing were to be heard on every side. Many sunk down to the ground, cut to the heart ; and many were filled with divine consolation. Toward the close of his journey he made this reflection : ' It is the seventy-fifth day since I arrived at Rhode Island, exceeding weak in body ; yet God has enabled me to preach an hundred and seventy-five times in public, besides exhorting frequently in private ! Never did God vouchsafe me greater comforts : never did I perform my journeys with less fatigue, or see such a continuance of the

15. ' All his family ' : i.e. the Orphan-house staff and children.

divine presence in the congregations to whom I preached.' In December he returned to Savannah, and in the March following arrived in England.

17. You may easily observe, that the preceding account is chiefly extracted from his own journals, which, for their artless and unaffected simplicity, may vie with any writings of the kind. And how exact a specimen is this of his labours both in Europe and America, for the honour of his beloved Master, during the thirty years that followed, as well as of the uninterrupted shower of blessings wherewith God was pleased to succeed his labours ! Is it not much to be lamented, that anything should have prevented his continuing this account, till at least near the time when he was called by his Lord to enjoy the fruit of his labour ? If he has left any papers of this kind, and his friends account me worthy of the honour, it would be my glory and joy to methodize, transcribe, and prepare them for the public view.

18. A particular account of the last scene of his life is thus given by a gentleman of Boston :—

'After being about a month with us in Boston and its vicinity, and preaching every day, he went to Old York ; preached on Thursday, September 27, there, proceeded to Portsmouth, and preached there on Friday. On Saturday morning he set out for Boston ; but before he came to Newbury, where he had engaged to preach the next morning, he was importuned to preach by the way. The house not being large enough to contain the people, he preached in an open field. But having been infirm for several weeks, this so exhausted his strength, that when he came to Newbury he could not get out of the ferry-boat without the help of two men. In the evening, however, he recovered his spirits, and appeared with his usual cheerfulness. He went to his chamber at nine, his fixed time, which no company could divert him from, and slept better than he had done for some

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18. York, called Old York to distinguish it from New York, is a town in New Hampshire, close to the

coast, and about seventy miles north of Boston. Portsmouth lies a few miles south of Old York.

weeks before. He rose at four in the morning, September 30, and went into his closet ; and his companion observed he was unusually long in private. He left his closet, returned to his companion, threw himself on the bed, and lay about ten minutes. Then he fell upon his knees, and prayed most fervently to God that if it was consistent with His will, he might that day finish his Master's work. He then desired his man to call Mr. Parsons, the clergyman, at whose house he was , but, in a minute, before Mr. Parsons could reach him, died, without a sigh or groan. On the news of his death, six gentlemen set out for Newbury, in order to bring his remains hither : but he could not be moved ; so that his precious ashes must remain at Newbury. Hundreds would have gone from this town to attend his funeral, had they not expected he would have been interred here. May this stroke be sanctified to the Church of God in general, and to this province in particular !'

II. 1. We are, in the second place, to take some view of his character. A little sketch of this was soon after published in the *Boston Gazette* , an extract of which is subjoined :—

' [Little can be said of him but what every friend to vital Christianity who has sat under his ministry will attest.] In his public labours he has, for many years, astonished the world with his eloquence and devotion. With what divine pathos did he persuade the impenitent sinner to embrace the practice of piety and virtue ! [Filled with the spirit of grace, he] spoke from the heart, and, with a fervency of zeal perhaps unequalled since the day of the Apostles, [adorned the truths he delivered with the most graceful charms of rhetoric and oratory.] From the pulpit he was unrivalled in the command of an ever-crowded auditory. Nor was he less agreeable and instructive in his private conversation ; happy in a remarkable ease of address, willing to communicate, studious to edify. May the rising generation catch a spark of that flame which shone, with such distinguished lustre, in the spirit and practice of this faithful servant of the most high God !'

2. A more particular, and equally just, character of him

has appeared in one of the English papers. It may not be disagreeable to you to add the substance of this likewise :—

‘The character of this truly pious person must be [deeply] impressed on the heart of every friend to vital religion. In spite of a tender [and delicate] constitution, he continued to the last day of his life, preaching with a frequency and fervour that seemed to exceed the natural strength of the most robust. Being called to the exercise of his function at an age when most young men are only beginning to qualify themselves for it, he had not time to make a very considerable progress in the learned languages. But this defect was amply supplied by a lively and fertile genius, by fervent zeal, and by a forcible and most persuasive delivery. And though in the pulpit he often found it needful by “the terrors of the Lord” to “persuade men,” he had nothing gloomy in his nature ; being singularly cheerful, as well as charitable and tender-hearted. He was as ready to relieve the bodily as the spiritual necessities of those that applied to him. It ought also to be observed, that he constantly enforced upon his audience every moral duty ; particularly industry in their several callings, and obedience to their superiors. He endeavoured, by the most extraordinary efforts of preaching, in different places, and even in the open fields, to rouse the lower class of people from the last degree of inattention and ignorance to a sense of religion. For this, and his other labours, the name of GEORGE WHITEFIELD will long be remembered with esteem and veneration.’

3. That both these accounts are just and impartial, will readily be allowed ; that is, as far as they go. But they go little farther than the outside of his character. They show you the preacher, but not the man, the Christian, the saint of God. May I be permitted to add a little on this head, from a personal knowledge of near forty years ? Indeed, I am thoroughly sensible how difficult it is to speak on so delicate a subject ; what prudence is required to avoid both extremes, to say neither too little nor too much ! Nay, I

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II. 2. ‘One of the English papers’: the *London Chronicle*, November 8, 1770.

know it is impossible to speak at all, to say either less or more, without incurring from some the former, from others the latter censure. Some will seriously think that too little is said ; and others, that it is too much. But without attending to this, I will speak just what I know, before Him to whom we are all to give an account.

4. Mention has already been made of his unparalleled zeal, his indefatigable activity, his tender-heartedness to the afflicted, and charitableness toward the poor. But should we not likewise mention his deep *gratitude* to all whom God had used as instruments of good to him ?—of whom he did not cease to speak in the most respectful manner, even to his dying day. Should we not mention, that he had a heart susceptible of the most generous and the most tender *friendship* ? I have frequently thought that this, of all others, was the distinguishing part of his character. How few have we known of so kind a temper, of such large and flowing affections ! Was it not principally by this, that the hearts of others were so strangely drawn and knit to him ? Can anything but love beget love ? This shone in his very countenance, and continually breathed in all his words, whether in public or private. Was it not this, which, quick and penetrating as lightning, flew from heart to heart ? which gave that life to his sermons, his conversations, his letters ? Ye are witnesses !

5. But away with the vile misconstruction of men of corrupt minds, who know of no love but what is earthly and sensual ! Be it remembered, at the same time, that he was endued with the most nice and unblemished *modesty*. His office called him to converse very frequently and largely with women as well as men ; and those of every age and condition. But his whole behaviour towards them was a practical comment on that advice of St. Paul to Timothy :

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5. This paragraph is all the answer that was necessary to the vile and scurrilous misrepresentations of Whitefield's relations with the women of his congregations, which were

made in Foote's play *The Minor* and other similar specimens of gutter-literature, in which he is travestied under the vulgar nickname of Dr. Squintum.

‘Entreat the elder women as mothers, the younger as sisters, with all purity.’

6. Meantime, how suitable to the friendliness of his spirit was the *frankness* and *openness* of his conversation!—although it was as far removed from rudeness on the one hand, as from guile [and disguise] on the other. Was not this frankness at once a fruit and a proof of his *courage* and *intrepidity*? Armed with these, he feared not the faces of men, but ‘used great plainness of speech’ to persons of every rank and condition, high and low, rich and poor, endeavouring only ‘by manifestation of the truth to commend himself to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.’

7. Neither was he afraid of labour or pain, any more than of ‘what man [could] do unto him’, being equally

*Patient* in bearing ill and doing well.

And this appeared in the *steadiness* wherewith he pursued whatever he undertook for his Master’s sake. Witness one instance for all,—the Orphan-house in Georgia, which he began and perfected, in spite of all discouragements. Indeed, in whatever concerned himself he was pliant and flexible. In this case he was ‘easy to be entreated’; easy to be either convinced or persuaded. But he was immovable in the things of God, or wherever his conscience was concerned. None could persuade, any more than affright, him to vary, in the least point, from that *integrity* which was inseparable from his whole character, and regulated all his words and actions. Herein he did

Stand as an iron pillar strong,  
And steadfast as a wall of brass.

8. If it be inquired what was the foundation of this integrity, or of his sincerity, courage, patience, and every other valuable and amiable quality; it is easy to give the answer. It was not the excellence of his natural temper, not the strength of his understanding, it was not the force

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7. The first poetical quotation is from S. Wesley jun.’s ‘Battle of the Sexes’ (*Poems*, 4to ed., p. 38); the second from *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, 1739, p. 202: ‘On Acts iv. 29,’ last two lines of v. 7.

of education ; no, nor the advice of his friends : it was no other than faith in a bleeding Lord , ' faith of the operation of God.' It was ' a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' It was ' the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which was given unto him,' filling his soul with tender, disinterested love to every child of man. From this source arose that torrent of eloquence which frequently bore down all before it ; from this, that astonishing force of persuasion which the most hardened sinners could not resist. This it was which often made his ' head as waters, and his eyes a fountain of tears.' This it was which enabled him to pour out his soul in prayer, in a manner peculiar to himself, with such fullness and ease united together, with such strength and variety both of sentiment and expression.

9. I may close this head with observing what an honour it pleased God to put upon His faithful servant, by allowing him to declare His everlasting gospel in so many various countries, to such numbers of people, and with so great an effect on so many of their precious souls ! Have we read or heard of any person since the Apostles, who testified the gospel of the grace of God through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world ? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads, of sinners to repentance ? Above all, have we read or heard of any who has been a blessed instrument in His hand of bringing so many sinners from ' darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God ' ? It is true, were we to talk thus to the gay world, we should be judged to speak as barbarians. But *you* understand the language of the country to which you are going, and whither our dear friend is gone a little before us.

III. But how shall we improve this awful providence ? This is the third thing which we have to consider. And the answer to this important question is easy (may God write it in all our hearts !). By keeping close to the grand doctrines which he delivered ; and by drinking into his spirit.

1. And, first, let us keep close to the grand scriptural doctrines which he everywhere delivered. There are many doctrines of a less essential nature, with regard to which even the sincere children of God (such is the present weakness of human understanding) are and have been divided for many ages. In these we may think and let think, we may 'agree to disagree.' But, meantime, let us hold fast the essentials of 'the faith which was once delivered to the saints', and which this champion of God so strongly insisted on, at all times, and in all places!

2. His fundamental point was, 'Give God all the glory of whatever is good in man'; and, 'In the business of salvation, set Christ as high and man as low as possible.' With this point, he and his friends at Oxford, the original Methodists, so called, set out. Their grand principle was, There is *no power* (by nature) and no *merit* in man. They insisted, all power to think, speak, or act aright, is in and from the Spirit of Christ, and all merit is (not in man, how high soever in grace, but merely) in the blood of Christ. So he and they taught: there is no power in man, till it is given him from above, to do one good work, to speak one good word, or to form one good desire. For it is not enough to say, all men are *sick of sin* no, we are all '*dead* in trespasses and sins.' It follows, that all the children of men are, 'by nature, children of wrath.' We are all '*guilty before God*,' liable to death temporal and eternal.

3. And we are all helpless, both with regard to the power and to the guilt of sin. 'For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?' None less than the Almighty. Who can raise those that are *dead*, spiritually dead in sin? None but He who raised us from the dust of the earth. But on what consideration will He do this? 'Not for works of righteousness that we have done.' 'The dead cannot praise Thee, O Lord'; nor do anything for the sake of which they should be raised to life. Whatever, therefore, God does, He does it merely for the sake of His well-beloved Son: 'He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities.' He Himself '*bore*' all '*our sins* in His own body

upon the tree.' He 'was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.' Here then is the sole meritorious cause of every blessing we do or can enjoy, in particular of our pardon and acceptance with God, of our full and free justification. But by what means do we become interested in what Christ has done and suffered? 'Not by works, lest any man should boast', but by faith alone. 'We conclude,' says the Apostle, 'that a man is justified by faith, without the works of the law.' And 'to as many as' thus 'receive Him, giveth He power to become the sons of God, even to those that believe in His name, who are born, not of the will of man, but of God.'

4. And 'except a man be' thus 'born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' But all who are thus 'born of the Spirit' have 'the kingdom of God within them.' Christ sets up His kingdom in their hearts; 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' That 'mind is in them, which was in Christ Jesus,' enabling them to 'walk as Christ also walked.' His indwelling Spirit makes them both holy in heart, and 'holy in all manner of conversation.' But still, seeing all this is a free gift, through the righteousness and blood of Christ, there is eternally the same reason to remember, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.'

5. You are not ignorant that these are the fundamental doctrines which he everywhere insisted on. And may they not be summed up, as it were, in two words,—the new birth, and justification by faith? These let us insist upon with all boldness, at all times, and in all places; in public (those of us who are called thereto), and at all opportunities in private. Keep close to these good, old, unfashionable doctrines, how many soever contradict and blaspheme. Go on, my brethren, in the 'name of the Lord, and in the power of His might.' With all care and diligence, 'keep that safe which is committed to your trust', knowing that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but this truth shall not pass away.'

6. But will it be sufficient to keep close to his doctrines, how pure soever they are? Is there not a point of still greater importance than this, namely, to drink into his spirit?

—herein to be a follower of him, even as he was of Christ? Without this, the purity of our doctrines would only increase our condemnation. This, therefore, is the principal thing—to copy after his spirit. And allowing that in some points we must be content to admire what we cannot imitate, yet in many others we may, through the same free grace, be partakers of the same blessing. Conscious then of your own wants and of His bounteous love, who ‘giveth liberally and upbraideth not,’ cry to Him that worketh all in all for a measure of the same precious faith, of the same zeal and activity, the same tender-heartedness, charitableness, bowels of mercies. Wrestle with God for some degree of the same grateful, friendly, affectionate temper, of the same openness, simplicity, and godly sincerity, ‘love without dissimulation.’ Wrestle on, till the power from on high works in you the same steady courage and patience; and above all, because it is the crown of all, the same invariable integrity!

7. Is there any other fruit of the grace of God with which he was eminently endowed, and the want of which among the children of God he frequently and passionately lamented? There is one, that is, catholic love, that sincere and tender affection which is due to all those who, we have reason to believe, are children of God by faith; in other words, all those, in every persuasion, who ‘fear God and work righteousness.’ He longed to see all who had ‘tasted of the good word,’ of a true catholic spirit, a word little understood, and still less experienced, by many who have it frequently in their mouth. Who is he that answers this character? Who is the man of a catholic spirit? One who loves as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as joint partakers of the present kingdom of heaven, and fellow heirs of His eternal kingdom, all, of whatever opinion, mode of worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus; who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is a man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all

these continually upon his heart, who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and an earnest desire of their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and labours, by all his words, to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power, in all things, spiritual and temporal, he is ready to 'spend and be spent' for them; yea, 'to lay down his life for his brethren.'

8. How amiable a character is this! How desirable to every child of God! But why is it then so rarely found? How is it that there are so few instances of it? Indeed, supposing we have tasted of the love of God, how can any of us rest till it is our own? Why, there is a delicate device, whereby Satan persuades thousands that they may stop short of it and yet be guiltless. It is well if many here present are not in this 'snare of the devil, taken captive at his will.' 'O yes,' says one, 'I have all this love for those I believe to be children of God; but I will never believe he is a child of God, who belongs to that vile congregation! Can he, do you think, be a child of God, who holds such detestable opinions? or he that joins in such senseless and superstitious, if not idolatrous, worship?' So we may justify ourselves in one sin by adding a second to it! We excuse the want of love in ourselves by laying the blame on others! To colour our own devilish temper, we pronounce our brethren children of the devil! O beware of this!—and if you are already taken in the snare, escape out of it as soon as possible! Go and learn that truly catholic love which 'is not rash,' or hasty in judging, that love which 'thinketh no evil', which 'believeth and hopeth all things'; which makes all the allowances for others that we desire others should make for us! Then we shall take knowledge of the grace of God which is in every man, whatever be his opinion or mode of worship then will all that fear God be near and dear unto us 'in the bowels of Jesus Christ.'

9. Was not this the spirit of our dear friend? And why should it not be ours? O Thou God of love, how long shall

Thy people be a by-word among the Heathen? How long shall they laugh us to scorn, and say, 'See how *these* Christians love one another!' When wilt Thou roll away our reproach? Shall the sword devour for ever? How long will it be ere Thou bid Thy people return from 'following each other'? Now, at least, 'let all the people stand still, and pursue after their brethren no more'! But whatever others do, let all of us, my brethren, hear the voice of him that, being dead, yet speaketh! Suppose ye hear him say, 'Now, at least, be ye followers of me as I was of Christ! Let brother "no more lift up sword against brother, neither know ye war any more!" Rather put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, brotherly kindness, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Let the time past suffice for strife, envy, contention; for biting and devouring one another. Blessed be God, that ye have not long ago been consumed one of another! From henceforth hold ye the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

10. O God, with Thee no word is impossible! Thou doest whatsoever pleaseth Thee! O that Thou wouldest cause the mantle of Thy prophet, whom Thou hast taken up, now to fall upon us that remain! 'Where is the Lord God of Elijah?' Let his spirit rest upon these Thy servants! Show Thou art the God that answerest by fire! Let the fire of Thy love fall on every heart! And because we love Thee, let us love one another with a 'love stronger than death'! Take away from us 'all anger, and wrath, and bitterness, all clamour and evil speaking!' Let Thy Spirit so rest upon us, that from this hour we may be 'kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake hath forgiven us'!

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9. 'See how these Christians love one another'; see note on Sermon XLIII, iii. 5.

The hymn on the next page was Charles Wesley's tribute to his old friend, and was appropriately printed at the close of his brother's sermon. Whitefield was tenderly loved by them both, and their lives had been wonderfully linked together in the early days of Methodism.

AN HYMN

SERVANT of God, well done !  
Thy glorious warfare's past ;  
The battle's fought, the race is won,  
And thou art crown'd at last ;  
Of all thy heart's desire  
Triumphantly possess'd,  
Lodged by the ministerial choir  
In thy Redeemer's breast.

In condescending love,  
Thy ceaseless prayer He heard ;  
And bade thee suddenly remove  
To thy complete reward :  
Ready to bring the peace,  
Thy beauteous feet were shod,  
When mercy sign'd thy soul's release,  
And caught thee up to God.

With saints enthroned on high,  
Thou dost thy Lord proclaim,  
And still *To God salvation* cry,  
*Salvation to the Lamb !*  
O happy, happy soul !  
In ecstasies of praise,  
Long as eternal ages roll,  
Thou seest thy Saviour's face !

Redeem'd from earth and pain,  
Ah ! when shall we ascend,  
And all in Jesu's presence reign  
With our translated friend ?  
Come, Lord, and quickly come !  
And, when in Thee complete,  
Receive Thy longing servants home,  
To triumph at Thy feet !



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PRINTED BY  
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,  
LONDON AND AYLESBURY.

